KASHMIR

Pandrethan, Avantipur & Martand

PANDRETHAN, AVANTIPUR & MARTAND

By

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PANDRETHAN, AVANTIPUR & MARTAND

1. GENERAL INFORMATION

THE VERY NAME OF KASHMIR INSTANTLY EVOKES in one's mind the cherished vision of a smiling verdant valley, picturesquely relieved with meandering rivers and brooks, gushing springs, calm lakes, majestic alleys of poplars, stately chenars, groves of graceful trees, orchards and superb gardens with colourful flowers, lawns, cascades and fountains—the entire panorama vibrating with beauty and genial loveliness framed by majestic mountains of soaring height. The valley is a paradise for tourists not only for its enchanting gifts of nature affording enjoyments and sports but for the works of man, both modern and ancient. Of compelling beauty are its fine handicrafts in various media following the age-old tradition. Equally absorbing is her rich heritage of ancient monuments and works of art of varied nature reflecting the glorious achievements of its past history.

The magnificent valley had a chequered and eventful career throughout its long history. Though strongly protected by formidable ranges of snow-clad mountains on all sides with a few difficult mountainous paths, it was not destined to remain isolated. With its scenic beauty, natural gifts and rich produce, the

well-girt valley, following the disintegration of the Maurya empire, became the coveted ground for the foreign hordes who swooped upon it through its various passes. Thus, in the early times the valley was occupied by the Kushāṇas and later on by the Hūṇas who, however, made themselves one with the children of the soil by accepting their religions and institutions. The close intercourse of the valley with Gandhāra is reflected in its art and architecture of this period. In difficult times, the rulers did not hesitate to take shelter in the warm court of the kings of Gandhāra. Thus, Meghavāhana, the first king of the restored Gonandīya dynasty, was brought from Gandhāra, in the royal court of which his father Gopāditya (a grandson of Yudhishṭhira, the last ruler of the Gonandīya dynasty, who was forced to leave Kashmir) had been living in exile. This dynasty was succeeded by the Kārkoṭa dynasty (*circa* A.D. 627-855) ushering a golden age of glory and expansion of power. Lalitāditya-Muktāpīḍa (*circa* A.D. 724-60), the most powerful and renowned monarch of this dynasty, made, by his frequent and extensive campaigns, the imperial power of Kashmir felt not only in a large part of India itself but beyond its northern, north-western and eastern frontiers. This dynasty was followed by the Utpala dynasty with the great Avantivarman (A.D. 855-83) as the first king bringing peace and prosperity to the kingdom. With the flight of Śūravarman (A.D. 939), the last king of this dynasty, a Brahmin named Yaśaskara was elected as the king. His son was killed by the minister Parvagupta who himself seized the royal fortune. The queen of Kshemagupta (A.D. 950-58), son and successor

of Parvagupta, was Diddā, the able but unscrupulous daughter of a chief of Lohara, who bequeathed the throne of Kashmir to her nephew Saṁgrāmarāja (A.D. 1003-28). Saṁgrāmarāja was, thus, the first king of the First Lohara dynasty which was, later on, brought to an end by Uchchala (A.D. 1101-11), the first ruler of the Second Lohara dynasty. The later part of the Hindu rule is marked by the progressive deterioration wrought by weak rulers, factions and intrigues leading to the impoverishment of the country.

The last Hindu queen, Koṭā-devī, herself married to a Tibetan adventurer, Riñchana, was overthrown by one of her officials, Shāh Mīr, possibly of the Turkish descent, who ascended the throne under the title of Sulṭān Shamsu'd-Dīn (A.D. 1339-42) and became the founder of the Sultanate. Pre-eminent among the Sulṭāns of the Shāh Mīrī dynasty was Bādshāh Zainu'l-'Ābidīn (A.D. 1420-70), a tolerant and benevolent ruler who not only brought prosperity and happiness to his subjects but promoted the cause of arts and crafts which are still being admirably practised on traditional lines. Ḥabīb Shāh, the last Sulṭān of Shāh Mīrī dynasty was dethroned by Ghāzī Shāh Chak (A.D. 1555-63), whose descendant, Yūsuf Shāh Chak, gave way to the Mughuls under Emperor Akbar (A.D. 1556-1605) who annexed Kashmir to his empire. The Mughul rule in its turn was brought to an end in about A.D. 1752 by Ahmad Shāh Ābdālī (Durrāni). This Afghan king and his successors ruled the country through their governors.

In A.D. 1819, the Sikhs under Ranjit Singh

conquered Kashmir which subsequently came into the possession of the Dogra Mahārāja Gulāb Singh in A.D. 1846. The Dogra rule also finally came to an end with the Independence of India.

The intermixture of many races with their varied creeds and institutions not only produced a composite culture in the valley but left diverse types of monuments, both secular and religious.

The early period of Kashmir's history is particularly remarkable for the rich heritage in the form of monuments created by the kings, queens and the officials. Thanks to the favourable atmosphere, the country became a repository of learning, both Buddhist and Brahmanical. Even those dissolute and weak kings who were mere puppets at the hands of their ambitious officials and were abandoned to pleasures and pomp, licentious and luxurious queens and the greedy officials, given to intrigues, revolts and oppression of the people and bringing ruin to the rulers and the ruled, revelled in the construction of stone temples, *maṭhas*, *stūpas* and *vihāras* and took steps for providing them with endowments for their maintenance and prosperity. Unfortunately, most of these pious foundations were destroyed, some substantially and others completely, by a few iconoclastic rulers, the chief being Sulṯān Sikandar. Several of the Sulṯāns also erected attractive and imposing edifices including mosques and tombs. Most renowned among them is the towering personality of Zainu'l-'Ābidīn, son of Sikandar, who exhibited the true Indian spirit of patronising equally all his subjects irrespective of their caste and creed. Wooden architecture even in

religious buildings was considerably in vogue in the Sultanate period. During the rule of the Mughul emperors, particularly Jahāngīr and Shāh Jahān, who were great patrons of landscape architecture, the country was beautified with magnificent formal gardens enlivened with cascades, tanks, sparkling fountains and rippling channels, fed by natural springs, in company with pleasure-resorts of masonry construction. These Mughul gardens are the living glory of the refreshing valley even today.

The available ancient temples of Kashmir form a homogeneous group, without any far-reaching evolutionary changes, conforming conservatively to the form and tradition already developed in the eighth century A.D. or even earlier. Differing largely from the general architectural movement of the rest of India, the temples of Kashmir have their distinctive local character and architectural features in their high-pitched and straight-edged pyramidal roof in two tiers, triangular pediments enclosing trefoil niches, disposition of the walls, peripteral and cellular layout, and pillars and pilasters of a peculiar style in several instances. The roofs are, no doubt, translations in stone of the wooden roofs of the Kashmiri houses evolved from early times. Due to the climatic conditions, the high-pitched roof is an exigency for preventing the frost and snow accumulating on the roof. The triangular pediments too are high-pitched; it appears to have been an architectural feature and motif derived from the portico-like front projection, with a triangular roof, of the houses. The layout of the temples in the centre of an oblong courtyard enclosed by

running cells or chapels fronted by an extremely narrow pillared verandah is derived from Buddhist monasteries of the *chatuḥ-śālā* type. The pillars with their vertical flutings and with quasi-Doric capitals in some cases undoubtedly betray the absorption of extraneous influence.

Among the monuments of the pre-Sultanate period, those at Pandrethan, Avantipur and Martand attract the largest number of tourists on account of their architectural grandeur and artistic qualities. Imbibing all the peculiarities of the typical architecture of the valley, the great temples at Martand and Avantipur are inspiring and instructive examples of the eighth and ninth centuries A.D. The temple at Pandrethan, though of a modest scale, is interesting on account of the presence of the roof, a rare survival in Kashmiri temples. The monuments in these three particular places are described in the following pages.

Located on the Anantnag-Srinagar highway, the temples at Pandrethan and Avantipur, with the slopes of the mountain-spurs in the background, stand in the open plains by the side of the Jhelum. While the former site is in the Cantonment area within the Municipal limits of Srinagar itself, the latter is only 28 km. from Srinagar. The monuments at both the places can conveniently be visited from Srinagar itself.

The ancient remains of the sun temple at Matan (Martand) are on a high plateau, at the foot of which is the holy *tīrtha* of Matan or Bavan with its sacred springs, tanks full of fish and a modern temple. The remains are at a distance of about 101 km. (by road)

from Srinagar, by Khanabal bypass and the village of Matan, the direction being south-east. The convenient halting place for visiting the monument is Achabal, 9 km. away towards the south. Here there are tourist huts, besides a Tourist Bungalow with five double-bedded rooms, all under the control of the Directorate of Tourism, Government of Jammu & Kashmir; for the reservation of the accommodation in these huts and Tourist Bungalow, the Director of Tourism, Srinagar, is to be addressed. Achabal itself has its own attractions in the springs which have been trained to foster and enliven a garden with fountains, tanks and channels. This garden was laid during the reign of the Mughul emperor Jahāngīr. Visitors may also halt at Anantnag (Islamabad), the headquarters of the district of that name, 8 km. south-west of Martand. Anantnag is on a regular bus-route.

Close to Bavan, slightly more than a kilometre away, there are two temples and a few rock-cut caves at Bumazuv. The larger of the two temples, both converted into Muslim *ziārats*, has generally been identified with the Bhīmakeśava temple, constructed at the instance of Bhīma Śāhi of Udabhāṇḍa, the maternal grandfather of Queen Diddā. The caves, though unpretentious, are somewhat important in view of the extreme rarity of rock-cut caves in Kashmir. Interested visitors may also like to see the temple-complex by the side of a circular masonry tank at Kother (derived from the ancient Kapaṭeśvara, the *tīrtha* of which was known as Pāpasūdana), about 4 km. away from Achabal. The tank fed by a natural spring is said to have been

provided at the instance of King Bhoja (evidently the Paramāra king) of Mālava, a contemporary of King Ananta (A.D. 1028-63) of Kashmir.

The monuments at Pandrethan, Avantipur and Martand are open to the visitors from the sunrise to the sunset. Photographs of these monuments and their antiquarian objects which are housed in the Sri Pratap Singh Museum at Srinagar are available on payment with the Superintending Archaeologist, Archaeological Survey of India, Frontier Circle, Srinagar, and with the Director General, Archaeological Survey of India, Janpath, New Delhi-110011. The Government Tourist Reception Centre, Srinagar, may be contacted by tourists for assistance in respect of accommodation and transport.

2. PANDRETHAN

PANDRETHAN (LAT. 34° 3′ 30″ N.; LONG. 74° 52′ E.; District Srinagar), 5 km. to the south-east of Srinagar, is now within the Municipal limits of Srinagar itself. The modern name is derived from the ancient appellation Purāṇādhishṭhāna which literally means the 'old capital'. Thus, Pandrethan represents the site of the ancient capital, Śrīnagarī, believed to have been founded by the great Maurya emperor Aśoka (*circa* 273-36 B.C.). With the shifting of the capital to the adjoining site of the present Srinagar, the ancient Śrīnagarī came to be known as Purāṇādhishṭhāna (old capital).

The selection of the site of the capital at Pandrethan in olden days might have been due to its providing certain advantages against the menace of devastating floods which used to cause havoc in the valley till Suyya, the engineer of King Avantivarman (A.D. 855-83), devised means for the better drainage of the valley by regulating the course of the Vitastā (Jhelum). The gentle slopes of the spurs of the high mountain (Zebanwan) on the northern and eastern sides of Pandrethan were above the level of the flood of meandering Vitastā which flows now on the southern and western sides of the site.

A. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Our chief source for the history of Pandrethan and also for Kashmir as a whole up to the middle of the

twelfth century A.D. is the *Rājataraṅgiṇī* (A.D. 1148-49) by Kalhaṇa. The account of this celebrated chronicler, remarkably well-versed in historical methods, is fairly authentic so far as the later part of his chronicle is concerned. The earlier part, prior to the rise of Durlabhavardhana (*circa* A.D. 627-63) of the Kārkoṭa dynasty, however, is shrouded in myths and legends, evidently for lack of reliable records at the disposal of Kalhaṇa who had to grope through the mist of yore and tradition. The order of kings and chronology of this part are rather confused. Kalhaṇa meticulously mentioned various pious foundations, many of which, no doubt, were in existence in his time. He was very careful to note the names of the builders, mostly kings, queens and officials. With the help of his invaluable information, scholars, particularly Alexander Cunningham and M. A. Stein, have been able to identify, reclaim and date the remains of many of the monuments. The authorship of some of the monuments ascribed by him to the early rulers is based on tradition and consequently has to be proved by detailed exploration and excavation.

According to Kalhaṇa, the town of Śrīnagarī built by Aśoka had 'ninety-six lakhs of houses resplendent with wealth'. Making due allowance for the exaggerations, it may be conceded that the city was both populous and prosperous at that time. Curiously enough, the chronicler did not ascribe any Buddhist foundations at Śrīnagarī to this Buddhist king. Aśoka's son Jalauka is credited with the installation of Jyeshṭharudra (Śiva) at the capital. Another sanctuary dedicated to Śiva, called Mihireśvara, is said to have been established at

Śrīnagarī by Mihirakula who has generally been identified with the Hūṇa king (*circa* A.D. 515-30) of that name.

Purāṇādhishṭhāna, according to the *Rājataraṅgiṇī*, witnessed considerable building activities during the reign of Pravarasena I (about the middle of the sixth century A.D.), son of King Meghavāhana of the restored Gonandīya dynasty, who was brought from Gandhāra. The king constructed a temple of Pravareśvara (Śiva) together with a circle of the Mātṛikās (*mātṛichakra*) and consecrated various holy shrines at the capital. With the transfer of the capital to the site of the modern Srinagar during the reign of Pravarasena II (about the fourth quarter of the sixth century A.D.), grandson of Pravarasena I, Purāṇādhishṭhāna lost the glory of the premier city for ever. However, being in close proximity to the new capital (which was initially called Pravarapura after the name of the founder, but later on appropriated the name of Aśoka's city), its prosperity did not eclipse altogether, and it continued to receive the patronage of the aristocracy occasionally.

Hiuen Tsang, the great Chinese pilgrim, came to Kashmir in about A.D. 631 during the reign of Durlabhavardhana, the first king of the Kārkoṭa dynasty. On his arrival at the capital he halted for one night in the Jayendra-vihāra established, according to the *Rājataraṅgiṇī*, by Jayendra, the maternal uncle of Pravarasena II, in the new capital. The king received him with great honours and invited him to his palace. He also provided his Chinese guest with twenty clerks to copy

out the sacred books and *śāstras* and five men to wait upon him. That the pilgrim spent here as many as two years in the pursuit of the Buddhist scriptures proves beyond doubt that Kashmir was a renowned centre of Buddhist learning at that period.

The pilgrim referred to both the new and old capitals. He found a flourishing Buddhist establishment at a distance of above 10 *li* (nearly 3 km.) to the south-east of the new capital. The centre was located between a mountain on the north and the old capital (Purāṇādhishṭhāna) on the south. In this establishment there was a monastery with more than three hundred monks, besides a sacred *stūpa*, believed to have been built over a tooth-relic of Buddha.

The next reference to Purāṇādhishṭhāna is in connexion with the construction of a temple of Vishṇu. It is related by Kalhaṇa that Meruvardhana, a minister of Pārtha (A.D. 906-21) of the Utpala dynasty, built a temple of Meruvardhanasvāmin here.

The last notice of the pious foundations at Pandrethan from the pen of Kalhaṇa relates to his own time in the reign of Jayasiṁha (A.D. 1128-55) of the Second Lohara dynasty. Referring to the meritorious works of Rilhaṇa, the minister, Kalhaṇa informs us that this virtuous minister embellished the cities of the two Pravarasenas (I and II) with bridges (or embankments) and *maṭhas* and erected at the first city (i.e. the old capital) of King Pravara(sena) a Śaiva temple after his name, Rilhaṇeśvara, which became pre-eminent among his religious foundations.

B. Antiquarian vestiges

From the above-mentioned literary references it is abundantly clear that the present site of Pandrethan in olden days nourished, apart from secular buildings, Brahmanical and Buddhist establishments. Among the Brahmanical sects, Śaivism was particularly patronized. However, Vaishṇavism and Śāktism were also not neglected altogether.

Coming to the actual remains, one is, however, confronted with the utter scarcity of the materials *in situ*. The only visible monument at the site is a temple of modest dimensions which will be described later on. The proximity of the old capital to the new capital, which in earlier days was responsible for its prolonged prosperity, was eventually proved fatal in the later period. The monuments at the site suffered irremediably due to the ruthless vandalism of man.

The process of destruction and denudation started in the later part of the reign of Sulṭān Sikandar (A.D. 1389-1413) who earned the epithet Butshikan (idol-breaker) by virtue of his breaking the images and demolishing the temples. Almost all the temples of the country are stated to have been desecrated and pulled down (or badly shattered) and the images were broken, mutilated or thrown away from the temples. The destruction of the temples is believed to have been effected by piling heaps of timber in the temples and setting fire to these heaps.[1] The chief

[1] *Annual Report, Archaeological Survey of India, 1915-16* (Calcutta, 1918), p. 56.

agent of the Sulṭān in this planned destruction was his minister Sūhabhaṭṭa, a Brahmin converted to Islam. A vivid picture of the persecution of the Brahmins and wholesale destruction of temples and images has been presented by Jonarāja (who died in A.D. 1459) who in his *Rājataraṅgiṇī* continued the narrative of Kalhaṇa down to his days in the reign of Sulṭān Zainu'l-'Ābidīn (A.D. 1420-70), the illustrious son of Sulṭān Sikandar. Jonarāja tells us that 'there was no city, no town, no village, no wood, where Sūha the Turushka left the temples of gods unbroken... Of the images which once had existed, the name alone was left, Sūhabhaṭṭa then felt the satisfaction which one feels on recovering from illness'. Among the broken images, specifically mentioned by Jonarāja, are included Vijayeśa, Chakradhara, Mārtaṇḍa, Bṛihat Buddha, Sureśvarī and Varāha. Firishta also left an account of the inhuman treatment to the Brahmins and destruction of temples. Thus, he wrote: 'After the emigration of the bramins, Sikundur ordered all the temples in Kashmeer to be thrown down; among which was one dedicated to Maha Dew, in the district of Punjhuzara, which they were unable to destroy, in consequence of its foundation being below the surface of the neighbouring water. But the temple dedicated to Jug Dew was levelled with the ground.' Firishta related curious discoveries made when the last temple (Jug Dew) and also a second temple built by Raja Bulnat at another place in Kashmir were razed to the ground and their foundations were dug up. He also referred to Seeva Dew Bhut's (i.e. Sūhabhaṭṭa) inducing Sikandar to melt the gold and silver images and to use

the metal for coining money. Ab'ul-Fadl also remarked on the iconoclastic zeal of Sikandar. 'Sulṭán Sikandar was a rigid follower of religious tradition and bigot. He overthrew idolatrous shrines and persecuted people not of his faith.'

The destruction of the temples was followed by the denudation of the sites. Proximity of Pandrethan to Srinagar made it a favourite quarry for building materials, particularly the limestone slabs, and these operations continued for centuries till recent times. In this context we may refer to the significant remark of Albert M. Verchère in connexion with his discovery of extensive old quarries of limestone in the Zeeawan bed which is not very far from Pandrethan. Writing in 1866 he said: 'The quarries are far from exhausted, or rather the amount removed is insignificant compared to what remains; blocks of any size and very sound could now be procured easily from the old quarries. It is a great pity that the Maharajah's government do not work this and other quarries for the limestone they want, instead of destroying the interesting Buddhist ruins which cover the valley.'[1] Elsewhere in this very article he referred to ruined remains at Pandrethan. Whatever little structural remains lay buried deep below the débris and accumulation of earth have practically been swept away by the building activities of the authorities of the Cantonment established in the area.

When William Moorcroft, George Trebeck, G. T. Vigne and A. Cunningham paid visits to Pandrethan in

[1] *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal*, XXXV, part II (1866), p. 171.

the first half of the nineteenth century, all structures had been reduced to shapeless ruins with the exception of the temple described below. Judging by the large masses of stones on the slopes at the foot of the spur, pieces of sculptures and some enormous *liṅgas*, Vigne felt the existence here once of a city and a vast Hindu temple-complex. Cunningham also noticed ancient remains, consisting of numerous carved stones, architectural fragments, old walls and pottery, extending for a long stretch of 5 km. from the foot of the Takht-i-Sulaiman (Sankaracharya hill) on the north-west to Panthchhok on the south-east of Pandrethan. He also published a drawing of a lofty colossal *liṅga* (reduced to fragments) relieved with four busts found on the top of a flat spur opposite the village of Lajan between Pandrethan and Panthchhok and at a distance of about 700 yards (640 m.) from the existing Pandrethan temple.

One of the mounds near the slope of the spur, close to the Parsi cemetery and about a km. northward of the existing temple, was excavated by Daya Ram Sahni of the Archaeological Survey of India in 1913. The excavation unearthed, besides several Buddhist sculptures, the remains of two dilapidated stone *stūpas* and the quadrangular rubble-built enclosure, possibly of a monastery, all assigned to the eighth century A.D. Both the *stūpas* were enclosed by compound-walls. The ground-plan of the larger of the two could alone be ascertained. It had a base, *pañcha-ratha* on plan, with re-entering angles between central projections, 72 ft. (21·945 m.) from one end to the other. The drum of the *stūpa* appears to have been decorated with sculptures,

of which several were found near by. The other *stūpa*, immediately to its west, retained only the damaged stairs on the western and the northern sides. The interior of both the *stūpas* yielded small hemispherical stone objects, probably stone miniatures of *stūpas*. The site of these Buddhist remains corresponds to that of the tooth-relic *stūpa* and monastery mentioned by Hiuen Tsang in respect of the distance and bearing from old and new capitals. Consequently, there is every reason to believe that the nucleus of this establishment went back prior to the days of Hiuen Tsang. Unfortunately, before the site could be fully excavated, it came into the possession of the military authorities who left hardly anything even of the structures exposed by Daya Ram Sahni.

The Buddhist sculptures found at the site are now housed in the Sri Pratap Singh Museum, Srinagar. Among them particularly noteworthy are two standing images of Buddha, a seated image of Buddha, a standing image of Lokeśvara (pl. I) and the upper portion of a sculpture representing the birth of Siddhārtha.

Also on display in the Museum are nearly twenty large Brahmanical images encountered in course of the digging for foundations of the military barracks at Pandrethan some time between 1923 and 1933. Most of these sculptures are more than life-size and display forceful execution. Not less than eight of these images represent Śiva, both standing and seated. Three of them, again, are three-headed, one of the two side faces being fierce-looking (Bhairava) and the other female (Umāvaktra). Such type of images of Mahādeva when fashioned

in the round presents usually four heads and when in relief three heads as in the present images. Gaṇeśa is represented by a single four-armed seated image. Among the eight images depicting the female divinities are identifiable figures of Gaṅgā and five of the Mātṛikās—Kaumārī (?), Vaishṇavī, Indrāṇī (pl. II), Vārāhī and Chāmuṇḍā (reduced to a skeleton), the first four four-armed and the last six-armed and terrible-looking. These Mātṛikā-images have been assigned by some scholars to the middle of the eighth century, i.e. the later part of the reign of Lalitāditya-Muktāpīḍa (*circa* A.D. 724-60). The drapery of most of these goddesses displays Hellenistic influence as found in Gandhāra; these images seem to be earlier in date. The find of this cognate group of the Mātṛikā-images lends credence to the statement of Kalhaṇa about the existence of a temple of Śiva (Pravareśvara) in the company of Mātṛikās at Purāṇādhisṭhāna (p. 11). Whether the images were installed by Pravarasena I or not will depend on the correct assessment of the age of not only these images but Pravarasena I himself. The number of the images of Śiva (available in the Museum) and also the *liṅgas* noticed by Vigne and Cunningham prove the existence of a good number of Śaiva sanctuaries at Pandrethan before it fell a prey to the depradations of man.

C. Śiva temple

As already noted, the only ancient monument now standing at Pandrethan is a temple (pl. III; Fig. 1) which enshrines a Śiva-*liṅga*, a recent installation. The

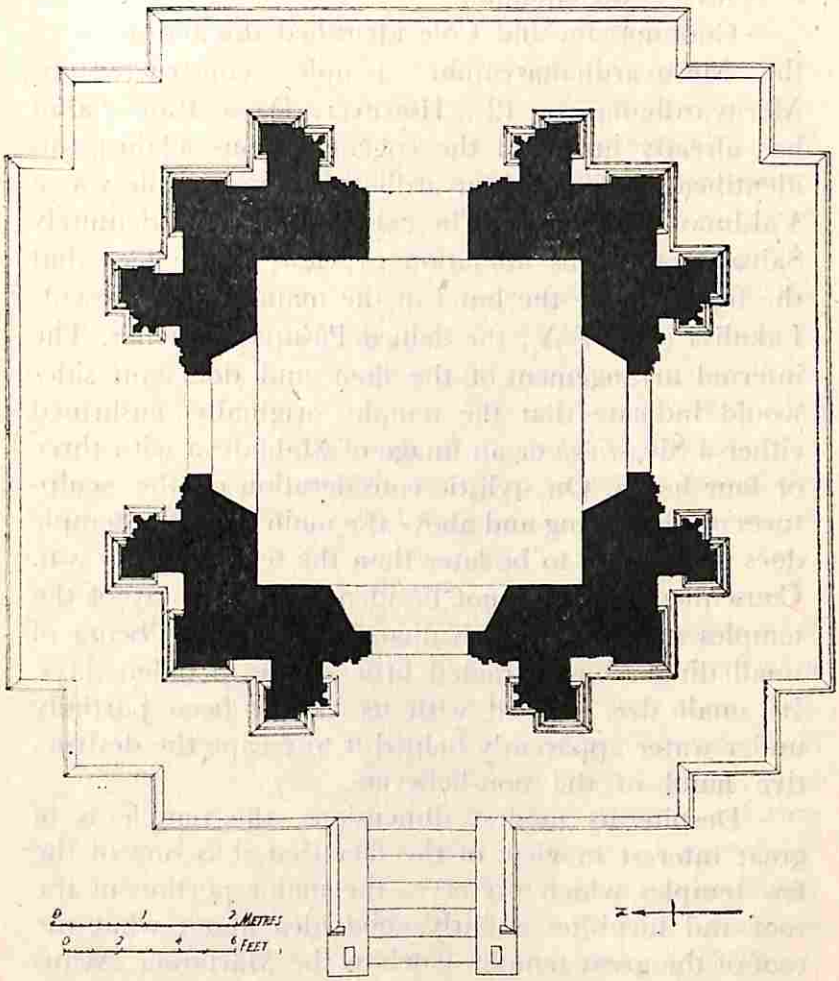


Fig. 1. Śiva temple, Pandrethan : plan

temple is located close to the main road by the side of a bend of the Jhelum.

Cunningham and Cole identified this temple with the Meruvardhanasvāmin temple constructed by Meruvardhana (p. 12). However, Daya Ram Sahni has already furnished the cogent reasons against this identification. The Meruvardhanasvāmin temple was a Vaishṇava sanctuary. The existing temple is definitely Śaiva in religious affiliation in view of the fact that the figure above the lintel of the main door represents Lakulīśa (pl. IV A), the deified Pāśupata teacher. The internal arrangement of the floor and doors on sides would indicate that the temple originally enshrined either a Śiva-*liṅga* or an image of Mahādeva with three or four heads. On stylistic consideration of the sculptures on the ceiling and above the main door, the temple does not appear to be later than the tenth century A.D. Consequently, it cannot be identified with any of the temples mentioned by Kalhaṇa. The temple being of small dimensions attracted little notice in olden days. Its small size coupled with its having been partially under water apparently helped it to escape the destructive hand of the non-believers.

Despite its modest dimensions, the temple is of great interest in view of the fact that it is one of the few temples which preserves the major portion of the roof and furnishes a fairly good idea about what the roof of the great temples (such as the Mārtaṇḍa, Avantisvāmin and Avantīśvara temples) looked like before their destruction. The temple also impresses one by virtue of its structural propriety, symmetry and restraint

in ornamentation. Its architectural effect is somewhat undermined by the raised ground around it.

The temple now stands in the midst of a tank-like depression which is fed by natural springs. The wall of its platform remains submerged almost throughout the year. Even the floor of the sanctum had been under knee-deep water[1] before the present arrangement for partially draining out the water has been made. A large-scale excavation around the temple is necessary to find out if there was a compound-wall around the temple and if there was any device to train the waters of the springs in case of their existence at the time of the construction of the temple. The excavation may also throw light on the controversy about the initial existence of the tank or otherwise. The moulded face of the platform and also the staircase, however, would indicate that there was a dry courtyard at least initially.

Made of ashlar stone masonry, the temple stands on a fairly high platform. The face of the latter has a set of projected mouldings at the base and at the top, the receding middle portion being plain. The platform is *tri-ratha* on plan, the front side (north-north-west) having a further central projection accommodating the stair with a moulded parapet. There are representations of brackets punctuated with flowers on the inner side of the upper portion of the parapet. The presence of a socket in the topmost course of both the parapets

[1]During his visit to the temple in August 1865 W. G. Cowie noticed the floor of the temple at a depth of about 1 m. below the surface of water.

(near the front edge) would indicate the existence once of a pillar or a sculpture.

The temple proper, above the platform, is also *tri-ratha* on plan externally, but square internally. All the central projections provide each a door-opening. The door-opening on the back side is smaller than the other three and its jambs do not have the slanting cut of the other jambs which are splayed to make the opening gradually expanding towards the sanctum sanctorum. This departure raises a doubt about the existence of this door originally.

The walls of the temple rest on a projecting member relieved with the foreparts of a series of squatting elephants in the attitude of supporting the load of the structure. Above this elephant frieze is a fillet capped by a somewhat *khurā*-shaped moulding. Save for the projecting pilasters at corners, the walls are plain. The base of the oblong pilasters presents three mouldings, while its somewhat splayed-out capital is relieved with lions with a tree in between. These pilasters support the entablature consisting of the moulded architrave, frieze and cornice. The frieze in the middle part presents a series of brackets (possibly relieved with lion-heads), each alternating with a recessed arch bearing within a flower with leaves or buds. But for the interruption of the projected triangular roofs of the central projections, the entablature would have run on all sides.

Perched on the entablature is the high-pitched pyramidal roof made of horizontal courses. The roof is divided into two storeys or tiers. The junction, on a level almost immediately above the summit of the

triangular roof of the central projection, is relieved with a series of brackets capped by projecting bands; between the brackets are corbelled recesses, each bearing within a lotus with two leaves or buds. The monotony of the otherwise plain face of the upper tier is pleasingly broken by four slightly-projecting trefoil niches (one each in the middle of the four sides) resembling *chaitya*-windows.

The crowning member above the topmost course (now missing) has disappeared. On the analogy of the better-preserved, but smaller, temple at Payar which has a remarkable similarity with the present temple, it may be presumed that a fluted member (resembling an *āmalaka*) served as the pinnacle. As per the drawing of Cunningham the fluted member at Payar in its turn was capped by a concave-sided conical member, the two together imparting the semblance of a fluted vase with a conical lid and at the same time maintaining effectively the pyramidal contour in keeping with the roof of the temple.

The triangular roof of the four central projections, which present the appearance of a sort of a narrow porch or portico, projects forward from the lower tier of the main pyramidal roof. It is supported by two architraves resting on oblong pilasters with base-mouldings similar to those of the corner-pilasters. While the architrave is relieved with brackets punctuated by corbelled recesses bearing flowers, the capital of the pilasters is decorated with motifs including scrolls.

Attached to the inner sides of the two pilasters of the central projections of each side, but slightly receding from them, are two more pilasters. Rising above

a set of three mouldings, their shafts are panelled. Their capitals are relieved with a pair of peacocks (or geese) with foliated tails. These pilasters support a faceted trefoil arch (or *toraṇa*) framed within the triangular roof of the central projections.

While the sills of the doors are absolutely plain, the jambs, made of ashlar courses, are faceted. The monolithic lintel, also faceted, presents a central frieze with seven arched niches, badly defaced.

The lintel supports a triangular pediment, its bottom relieved with brackets, each alternating with a flower. Inside the pediment is reproduced a trefoil arch. Within this arch of the front side is carved in high relief the figure of Lakulīśa, wearing a *dhotī* and an *upavīta* (sacred thread) and seated cross-legged (pl. IV A). Unfortunately, the figure is greatly damaged. Its right hand might have been in *abhaya* or *vyākhyāna mudrā*. Against the left arm is a damaged *lakuṭa* (staff). The space within the trefoil arch of the remaining three sides of the temple is now empty. Originally they might have borne the reliefs of some forms of Śiva.

In contradistinction to the plain interior walls of the sanctum, the ceiling (pl. IV B) is exquisitely and effectively carved. It is made of nine stone slabs arranged in three oversailing courses. The bottom course consists of four triangular slabs which, spanning the corners of the cornice, touch one another in a manner that a reduced square opening is formed within. Each of these slabs is boldly relieved with a pair of flying garland-bearers (pl. V A) holding a long garland with their hands. The modelling of the figures with their blithe

movement is fairly natural and arresting. The middle spanning course of the ceiling also comprises four triangular slabs. Covering the corners of the bottom square opening, these slabs produce a still smaller square, the opening of which is capped by a single square slab forming the topmost course. The four slabs of the middle course are relieved each with a flying *vidyādhara*, carrying a ring-like object (possibly a wreath) in his right hand and a lotus-stalk in the left hand (pl. V B); a portion of the scarf is seen floating in the air. The vertical face of these slabs is carved with the representations of brackets, each punctuated with a flower within a corbelled recess. A full-blown lotus with twelve full petals is reproduced on the topmost square slab. Around the lotus is a circular beaded border. Beyond this border and at each of the four corners of the square is again a flying figure with outstretched hands seemingly holding up the circular border of the lotus.

The entire ceiling is perched on a corbelled course running on all sides. This corbelled course, which projects inwards and is decorated with a series of flowers within squarish compartments, is supported by a horizontal row of brackets projecting from the course below. The course below the brackets is also corbelled and projects inwards beyond the plumb of the vertical walls of the sanctum.

The load over the ceiling is relieved by the provision of a hollow pyramidal chamber above the ceiling. There is no access to this blind chamber which is closed on all sides by the facing slabs of the pyramidal roof of the temple.

As already noted, the *liṅga*, which is under worship on a terraced platform, is a modern installation. Whereabouts of the original *liṅga* or image are not known. The location of a pedestal or platform can merely be surmised from a shallow, but broad, squarish depression in the middle part of the floor made of large stone slabs.

3. AVANTIPUR

AVANTIPUR (LAT. 33° 55′ N.; LONG. 75° 1′ E.; District Anantnag) is 28 km. (by road) south-east of Srinagar. Situated at the foot of one of the spurs of the mountain Wastarwan, it overlooks the Jhelum which wends its tortuous way gently by the side of the Jammu-Srinagar highway. The site still retains the ancient name, Avantipura.

A. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The foundation of the town of Avantipura has been ascribed to Avantivarman (A.D. 855-83) by Kalhaṇa who noted: 'At the site called Viśvaikasāra, which procures final beatitude for those who die [there], the king founded the [town of] Avantipura, an abode of abundant enjoyments'. From this statement it appears that the place had already been a holy centre before the town was established by the king after his own name.

Avantivarman, the first king of the Utpala dynasty, was the son of Sukhavarman and the grandson of Utpalaka or Utpala who was a maternal uncle of the Kārkoṭa king Chippaṭajayāpīḍa, son of Lalitāpīḍa and Jayādevī, daughter of a spirit-distiller. Taking advantage of the minority of the king, Utpala and his four brothers virtually grasped the regal powers and ultimately caused the death of their royal nephew and became king-makers. Then ensued an internecine strife and rivalry among the brothers themselves. After the death of

Utpala, his son Sukhavarman consolidated his power, placed his nominee Utpalāpīḍa on the throne and practically became the *de facto* ruler. Eventually he had been on the point of usurping the crown when he was killed by one of his relatives. Soon afterwards Utpalāpīḍa was dethroned by the minister Śūra who crowned Avantivarman as the king.

Though of an inglorious lineage, Avantivarman made himself illustrious by virtue of his peaceful pursuits, conscientious care of his subjects and liberal patronage of arts and learning and made himself fondly live in the memory of posterity. He did not launch on an ambitious career of conquests. Aided by his wise and faithful minister Śūra, the great king devoted his energies to the consolidation of his kingdom by subduing the unruly opponents and turbulent chiefs and brought back the much-needed peace and prosperity to the country, hitherto torn by court-intrigues, factions and oppression of the subjects during the reign of the later feeble puppet-kings of the Kārkoṭa dynasty. He made earnest efforts to ameliorate the economic condition of the people and picked up a gifted person, Suyya, who by his engineering operations regulated the course of the Vitastā, thereby arresting the devastating periodical floods and consequent famine, and promoted irrigation and agricultural operations over an extensive area with the result that the output of crops increased tremendously. His court was adorned by men of learning and poets like Muktākaṇa, Śivasvāmin, Ānandavardhana and Ratnākara. His just and peaceful rule of twenty-eight years was made further memorable by a large

number of religious foundations and endowments, not only by himself but by his relatives and officials.

At Avantipura itself Avantivarman erected two magnificent temples, one dedicated to Vishṇu called Avantisvāmin and the other to Śiva called Avantīśvara, the former built before his accession to the throne and the latter after obtaining sovereignty. The king was a devout worshipper of Vishṇu from his childhood and remained Vaishṇava in the core of his heart till his death. However, out of great regard for his minister Śūra who was a devotee of Śiva, he 'bore himself outwardly as a worshipper of Śiva', and only on his death-bed pathetically disclosed to his minister his 'attachment to the worship of Viṣṇu which he had long hidden'.

It appears that Avantivarman made the required provision for the maintenance of the temples at Avantipura and the ritualistic worship of the images by lavish endowments. Thus, Kalhaṇa informs us that the greedy Kalaśa (A.D. 1063-89) of the First Lohara dynasty confiscated the villages which had formed the endowment of the Avantisvāmin temple.

In the time of Kalhaṇa and immediately after the accession of King Jayasiṁha (A.D. 1128-55) of the Second Lohara dynasty when his position became precarious due to the uprisings and attacks of Bhikshāchara, the great-grandson of Kalaśa, and his powerful Ḍāmara (feudal landlords) allies, the Avantisvāmin temple braced a siege when its courtyard 'protected by mighty stone walls' provided shelter to royal officers Bhāsa and Kshemānanda and their companions who were besieged by the Ḍāmaras of Holaḍā. The stone walls of the

enclosure of the temple withstood the siege successfully and the Ḍāmaras headed by the powerful Ṭikka could not overcome the besieged, 'though they fought them by lighting fires, throwing stones and making breaches'. Ultimately, the Ḍāmaras had to disperse at the approach of Sujji, the commander-in-chief of Jayasiṁha, to relieve Bhāsa and his retinue.

The town of Avantipura, on account of its situation on the main route to the capital from the eastern and south-eastern sides, maintained its importance for many centuries. Kalhaṇa referred to this town in course of his narrations of the anecdotes of the reigns of Kalaśa (A.D. 1063-89), Harsha (A.D. 1089-1101), Sussala (A.D. 1112-20 and 1121-28) and Jayasiṁha (A.D. 1128-55). We hear of kings stopping at Avantipura on way to Vijayeśvara (modern Vijabror) from the capital and back. The town was a scene of several battles and sometimes used to serve as a station for the troops. During the reign of Sussala, Yaśorāja, the *maṇḍaleśa* (governor), was posted here along with a great force of troops. For its strategic position, the town appears to have been provided with military requirements as well. Thus, Sujji, commander-in-chief of Jayasiṁha, during his fight with the enemy constructed a bridge on the Gambhīrā with boats brought from Avantipura.

That the town was a place of importance even up to the reign of Sulṭān Ḥasan Shāh (A.D. 1472-84) is proved by the chronicles of Jonarāja, a contemporary of Zainu'l-'Ābidīn (A.D. 1420-70), and his pupil Śrīvara who was a contemporary not only of Zainu'l-'Ābidīn, Ḥaidar Shāh and Ḥasan Shāh but of Muḥammad

Shāh and Fatḥ Shāh in the beginning of their royal career. Thus, in the short reign of Sulṭān Jamshīd (A.D. 1342-43), his brother 'Ālī Sher (who, deposing Jamshīd, ascended the throne under the name of 'Alāu'd-Dīn) at the break of hostility with the Sulṭān betook himself to Avantipura, his stronghold. While he was away from Avantipura in his mission to kill his brother's son, Jamshīd with a formidable force besieged the town. The operations resulted in the slaughter of 'Ālī Sher's partisans, the number of whom was so many that the current of the Vitastā (Jhelum) having been blocked by dead bodies is said to have flowed backwards. During the reign of Sulṭān Zainu'l-'Ābidīn a canal was caused to be excavated in the lands of Avantipura by the Sulṭān who also visited the town on his way to various places to witness the festival of flowers accompanied by cultural programmes and fireworks. Sulṭān Ḥasan Shāh along with his ministers also stayed at Avantipura for some time.

From the above survey, it is abundantly clear that the history of the town of Avantipura covers a period of more than six hundred years. In course of its long career, the town, being on an important route to the capital, witnessed both prosperity and adversity. Being a halting place of the kings and a camping-ground of the troops, it, no doubt, had, apart from palaces, many edifices, both secular and religious.

With the exception of the remains of two temples built by Avantivarman, none of these edifices is now visible. All that remains of the town are long stretches of stone walls and rubble foundations along the slope of

the spur and these too are being obliterated by modern constructions. Cunningham saw, besides the two temples by Avantivarman, the remains of two more temples which can now be hardly traced. It is likely that the mounds, on which some modern structures have come up, bear within them lowest parts of some ancient structures.

Being on the bank of the Jhelum, Avantipura formed a favourite quarry of sized stones which were conveniently carried through the river to Srinagar. The large-scale denudation of the site can easily be visualized when one sees the remains of the two existing temples. Their enclosure and precincts should have been studded with fallen stones of the stupendous structural complex after their destruction. Instead, only a few slabs have been left. The denudation must have started before the major portion of their enclosure got filled and continued for centuries afterwards. Daya Ram Sahni found several architectural stones lying on the bank of the river.

B. Explorations and excavations

The earliest notice of Avantipur (now reduced to a village) possibly is by George Forster who visited Bhyteepour (Wantipur, Avantipur) in 1783 on way to Srinagar from Islamabad by the Jhelum. He noted: 'In the vicinity of Bhyteepour are seen the remains of an Hindoo temple, which, though impaired by the ravages of time, and more by the destructive hand of the Mahometans, still bore evident marks of a superior taste and

sculpture'. Apparently, he referred to the Avantisvāmin temple.

William Moorcroft, who saw Wantipur in 1823, left a brief notice of the remains of not only this temple but the other one (Avantīśvara), locally known as the building of the Pāṇḍus, at the adjacent village. The gateway of the Avantisvāmin temple had still to that time two pillars supporting the entablature, one each on either side. The temple itself was reduced to a confused mass of ruins. Struck by the magnitude of the remains of the two temples and immense size of the stone blocks used in their construction, he felt that the chief cause of the overthrow of the temples was earthquakes.

Baron Charles Hügel, who visited Ventipoor in 1835, said very little about the two temples mentioned under the names Vencádati Devi and Ventimádati (smaller one).

Shortly afterwards G. T. Vigne went to the village, called by him as Wentipur. He referred to the gateway and the colonnade of the temple (Avantisvāmin), apart from the analogous remains of two more edifices with surrounding enclosures a few hundred metres away and also mud and stone walls of the ancient town which covered the slope of the mountain for a considerable distance.

The treatment of A. Cunningham is both elaborate and erudite. Apart from referring to the amorphous ruins of two temples, one each on either side of the road from Srinagar, he furnished a detailed account of the Avantīśvara and Avantisvāmin temples based on the data available at that time. He was the first scholar to

reclaim the ancient names of these two particular temples. He also published rough plans of both the temples, a sketch of the gateway and general view of the Avantisvāmin temple and the elevation of a small part of the peristyle which he unearthed at the north-eastern corner of the quadrangle of the Avantisvāmin temple. The errors in his plans and description are entirely due to the fact that very little of the superstructure, excepting that of the gateways, was visible at that time. In fact, the entire quadrangle of the Avantisvāmin temple was buried under the earth up to the top of the entablature of the peristyle, and the basement of the temple proper was covered with a pile of fallen material.

W. G. Cowie in 1865 exposed the southern flank of the peristyle of the Avantisvāmin temple and a portion of it between the south-eastern corner and the gateway. From his excavation he observed that the entablature of the southern flank 'had been thrown down before the silting up of the quadrangle'. In his published report he did not describe the portion unearthed, but he had furnished a drawing by H. Wilson, presenting details of decorations on four of the pilasters of the peristyle.

The brief notice of Henry Hardy Cole who visited the hamlet of Avantipore in 1868 is practically based on the account of Cunningham. However, he has bequeathed to us excellent photographs of the remains of the Avantisvāmin and Avantiśvara temples, as they rose above the then ground-level. According to him, scarcely anything remained except the foundations and outlines of the colonnades and the gateways of the two temples. Cole also published five drawings.

James Fergusson did not add anything new to what was known at that time. He published a drawing (prepared by Wilson) of a decoration on a pilaster to show some distant affinity of this decorated pilaster with the pillars of the tomb of Mycenae.

J. Ph. Vogel after his visit to the valley in 1903 published a report on the preservation of the monuments in Kashmir. This report contains a brief note on some conservation measures required by the temples.

In 1907 John Marshall, Director General of Archaeology in India, visited Kashmir. He furnished his recommendations in his detailed 'Note on Archaeological Work in Kashmir' to the Kashmir Durbar, suggested the excavation at the temples of Avantipur and offered active assistance of the Archaeological Survey of India to the works to be carried out. The Durbar, however, was in favour of the field-work being undertaken by its own officers. Accordingly, in 1910 J. C. Chatterji, Director, Archaeological and Research Department, Jammu and Kashmir State, took up the work of excavation. He unearthed the greater part of the peristyle of the Avantisvāmin temple and excavated its courtyard to a depth of nearly 2 metres from the then ground-level, the floor of the courtyard still being nearly 2·5 metres below. Noteworthy among the portable antiquities found by him were some copper coins, a few broken images and 'fragments of charred birch-bark manuscripts of a comparatively late date'.

The work was next taken up on a larger scale in 1913 by Daya Ram Sahni who had been deputed to Kashmir by the Director General of Archaeology in

India. He exposed the entire quadrangle of the temple down to the floor of the courtyard and reclaimed the extant basement of the central shrine, remains of the subsidiary shrines and the basement of the peristyle after removing the silt and débris. He also furnished a detailed description of the structures unearthed by him. The excavation yielded a rich crop of antiquities including one hundred and twenty-one coins (which are issues of Toramāṇa and some other early Hindu rulers, Sulṭāns of the Shāh Mīrī dynasty, Durrānī Afghan rulers and Dogra Mahārājas) besides some defaced ones, a large number of sculptures (mostly fragmentary), terracotta figurines (some representing a goddess and Gaṇeśa), earthen *liṅgas* and pottery including large jars for storage of foodstuff. Most of the images represent Vishṇu, some in his four-headed Chaturvyūha-mūrti, usually four-armed and standing; carved in the round and contemporaneous with the temple, these images were enshrined in the cells of the peristyle and subsidiary shrines. The other images include one each of Ardhanārīśvara, Gaṇeśa and Gaja-Lakshmī.

Daya Ram Sahni also excavated the quadrangle of the Avantīśvara temple down to the level of the floor of the courtyard. The operations brought to light a small earthen jar containing one hundred and eight copper coins, variously of Toramāṇa, Śaṅkaravarman (A.D. 883-900) who was a son of Avantivarman, Diddā-Kshemagupta (A.D. 950-58), Diddā (A.D. 980-1003), Saṁgrāmarāja (A.D. 1003-28), Ananta (A.D. 1028-63), Kalaśa (A.D. 1063-89), Harsha (A.D. 1089-1101), Sussala (A.D. 1112-20 and 1121-28), Jayasiṁha (A.D. 1128-55)

and Vijayasuta-Siṁhadeva (*circa* A.D. 1287-1301). No relics were found to suggest that the temple had been in use after the fourteenth century A.D.

From the find of fragments of birch-bark manuscripts of a late date containing accounts of articles of worship (such as oil, incense, etc.) in two of the cells of the peristyle of the Avantisvāmin temple, Daya Ram Sahni pertinently inferred that some portions of this particular temple were brought into re-use after the destruction of the temple proper. He also found a large earthen jar (now in the Sri Pratap Singh Museum) which is incised with *mahā śrī-Antiva*(?)*rma*(?)*-ghaṭa 1583.* According to him, the date is referable to the Vikrama era and would correspond to A.D. 1527.

Since the operations of Daya Ram Sahni, practically no work has been done at the temple-sites. The only substantial accounts of the two temples are by Ram Chandra Kak who, however, based his description mostly on the report of Daya Ram Sahni, and by Percy Brown whose description is enlivened by a drawing showing the conjectural restoration of Avantisvāmin temple.

C. Avantisvāmin temple

Compared to the Mārtaṇḍa temple, the Avantisvāmin temple (pl. X) is, no doubt, small. However, what it lacked in grandiosity, it adequately compensated by its elegant form, proportionate layout of different members of a fairly large complex and above all its wealth of effectively distributed exuberant carvings

and refined and graceful figural sculptures—a masterly symphony of architecture and art. The temple reflects the personality of a peace-loving prince with an innate aesthetic sense and a keen appreciation of beauty—a prince whose ambition was not to dazzle his subjects by far-flung conquests of others' realms but to provide an atmosphere of peace and prosperity in which the people could thrive with a mind on higher thoughts and beatitude. The intense religiosity of the prince is depicted effectively in two of the reliefs. Avantivarman, no doubt, recruited the best available artists of the country to make the mansion of his chosen god a thing of great beauty—the earthly Vaikuṇṭha.

Left to itself, the temple-complex is not small. The ground-level of the area around the temple quadrangle being very high, due to the accumulation over a millennium, people scarcely perceive the magnitude and importance of the temple which is indeed magnificent and inspiring even in its ruins. The ruins that still remain proudly proclaim the skill of the inspired artists and daring architects as well.

Various factors contributed to the ruin of the temple-complex as a whole. The shrines, both main and subsidiary, were most probably stripped of their superstructure by the relentless agents of Sulṭān Sikandar. The fall of the roofs made the surviving parts of the walls a constant prey to the inclemencies of nature, and stone blocks started falling down one after another. The process of disintegration was accelerated by the inherent weakness of the building material itself. The stone used in the construction is

not merely soft and fragile but lacks homogeneity of texture and is prone to exfoliation. Many of the architectural members got damaged and broken due to the poor quality of stone. Conscious of the weakness of the stone which, no doubt, is easy to work on to a fine finish and carving, the builders used stone slabs of stupendous sizes, evidently with the idea of ensuring stability. This magnificent creation would have certainly lasted if it received periodical repairs against the forces of nature and if it did not suffer from the ruthless vandalism of man.

The effect of the poor quality of stone on the exuberant carvings is in fact disastrous. The figures in relief and decorative motifs have not only been defaced but disappeared altogether at many places due to the exfoliation and abrasion. This is all the more deplorable in view of the high quality of charming sculptures and carvings. Many of the divine figures carved on the walls could not be identified due to the effacement.

(*i*) *Layout of the temple-complex*

The layout (pl. XX) of the original complex consists of a temple erected in the central part of a spacious oblong courtyard, four smaller shrines at the four corners of the central shrine, a running roofed peristyle with an array of cells ranged around the periphery of the paved courtyard, and an imposing gateway, the last provided in the middle part of the western side of the cellular peristyle. This type of layout, particularly the ranges of cells, is peculiar to Buddhist establishments from very

early times. It is very likely that the Brahmanical temple-builders of Kashmir borrowed this layout from the followers of Buddhism which was the dominant religion in the valley at least up to the sixth century A.D. The symmetrical layout of the four corner-shrines would indicate that the temple was conceived as *pañchāyatana*. In front of the staircase of the central shrine was a sort of a pillared *maṇḍapa* with open sides, containing within perhaps a Garuḍa-*dhvaja*. In a later period some buildings, including two shrines, cropped up on the courtyard.

(*ii*) *Main temple*

It is a matter of great regret that very little of the superstructure of the central temple (pl. VI B) has survived. Built on a fairly high platform in two tiers, it is approached by an elegant staircase.

STAIRCASE.—The stone staircase is in two tiers in conformity with the double terrace of the platform. The flight of steps is flanked on either side by a sloping member, beyond which is the raised parapet.

The outer face of the two parapets presents bold mouldings: rising above two plain courses (the lower course projecting outward stands on a projecting footing) is a bold quirked ovolo capped by a straight receding fillet (the whole presenting the appearance of a *kumbha* moulding), above which is a high plain receding course (*kaṇṭha*, dado); projecting above the latter is the crowning moulding resembling an inverted *khurā* (*cyma recta*).

Attached to the front side of the two parapets of the lower tier is a dwarf pilaster each. The treatment of two of the sides of these two pilasters is particularly lavish and remarkable. Resting on the lowest course (above the footing) of the parapet, the base of the pilasters is moulded: above the plain vertical lower portion is a *kumbha* moulding capped by a recess, projecting from which is the massive filleted torus with a straight receding fillet below and above. The front side of the oblong shaft of both the pilasters is relieved with a five-foil arch (with a beaded border) resting on two pilasters with a moulded base, a panelled oblong shaft and a moulded capital supporting an architrave with its splayed-out top in the form of an inverted *khurā*. Perched on this architrave (from the top of which the arch springs) is a bird. The niche formed by these pilasters and the arch on both the flanks bears the elegantly-bejewelled figures of Kāmadeva (not Vishṇu as suggested by Daya Ram Sahni) in the company of his two consorts (possibly Rati and Prīti), all seated on a drapery with bell-shaped tassels placed on a footed seat, below which are three birds, the necks of two of them caressingly touching each other. The bejewelled two-armed consorts with smiling faces, leaning against their lord, are seated in *mahārāja-līlā*, one of their hands carrying a garland. Kāmadeva, wearing a long garland, is in *lalitāsana* with the pendant foot resting on a foot-stool. The figure of Kāmadeva (pl. VII C) on the northern pilaster is six-armed. While the uppermost right hand carries flowery arrows, the corresponding left hand bears a bow. The lowest right hand holds a long staff, at the bottom end of which is a

flower. The corresponding left palm bears either a garland or the end of the scarf which is tied round the waist and the left knee. With his middle right hand Kāmadeva touches the braid (*veṇī*) of the consort on his right side and with the remaining left hand the bosom of his consort on his left side. The figure of Kāmadeva on the southern pilaster is four-armed, the upper right and left hands carrying respectively flowery arrows and a bow. The lower right hand holds a long staff, at the base of which is a flower. The attribute in the other left hand is damaged.

The northern side of the shaft of the southern pilaster contains an interesting assemblage within an oblong panel (pl. VII B). The central figure has been identified by Daya Ram Sahni as Kṛishṇa. However, it appears to us that the figure represents a young prince, possibly Avantivarman himself who, as already noted, erected this temple before his accession to the throne. Particularly noteworthy is the coiffure of not only the central figure but also of most of its youthful companions; the hair is in locks falling on sides as in the *kākapaksha* mode of hair-dress befitting *kumāras*. What Daya Ram Sahni identified as a cow is, in fact, the end of a garland held with two hands by the kneeling companion on the bottom dexter. Some of the companions are with folded hands, while others are holding garlands. Draped in a *dhotī*, held by a beaded belt attached to which is a sword, and a decorated scarf obliquely thrown across his right shoulder and the left waist, the moustached prince is bejewelled in plain thick *valayas*, beaded armlets and a beaded *hāra*. As if looking towards the temple,

the prince holds in his slightly raised hands flowers to be offered to the deity. On either side of the head of the prince is a flying *vidyādhara* carrying a garland.

The central figure on the corresponding panel (pl. VII A) of the northern pilaster facing the stair has been identified as Brahmā by Daya Ram Sahni. However, the figure undoubtedly represents a king. Attached to the belt of the figure is a sword, an attribute absolutely unbecoming of Brahmā. Whether the figure stands for King Utpalāpīḍa, Sukhavarman who became the *de facto* ruler or Avantivarman himself is not known. A panel (pl. XIII B) on a loose stone within the compound of the Avantīśvara temple depicts a similar figure that evidently represents Avantivarman who built that particular temple after attaining sovereignty. If the figure in the present panel stands also for Avantivarman, we have to presume that the carvings were finished only after he had become a full-fledged sovereign. The royal figure is not only moustached but bearded. Standing with flexions, the king, with his face turned towards the temple, has his right hand raised above his left shoulder towards the temple; the object in his hanging left hand is either a wreath or a *hāra*. Dressed in a *dhotī* held by a beaded belt with a flower-shaped clasp and a scarf thrown across his left shoulder, he is decked in a long garland, thick *valayas*, beaded armlets, flower-shaped ear-ornaments and a crown. One of the fillet-ends may be seen above his right shoulder. By the right side of the king are standing two lavishly-bejewelled women, each with a scarf covering the head. The taller woman, immediately by the side

of the king, wears a long garland and a crown and evidently represents the chief queen. Her hands are in *añjali-mudrā* near the chest. The other lady holds a garland with her two hands; she may represent either the second queen or an attendant of the chief queen. The *entourage* of the king consists of male figures, either standing or seated, some with folded hands, one carrying a tray (presumably with flowers) and others holding wreaths. On the right side of the head of the king is a figure (*vidyādhara*?) with a tray in its left hand and a crown in the right. The corresponding figure on the dexter holds a garland. The lower portion of both the figures is left undepicted.

The capital of the pilasters is a splayed-out member with horizontal facets and bands gradually rising upwards like corbels. Above the bottom thin facet is a band with a bevelled face. The broad band above is carved luxuriantly with a row of leonine heads projecting above the bevelled band below. These heads support each a bracket, the façade of the latter relieved with floral and plant motifs. The trefoil niches between the row of lion-heads supporting the brackets contain either a *haṁsa* or a lotus-plant. Above this band is a horizontal row of bells hanging down from a string-like thin facet. The band above is semicircular. Above this is a thin facet. Projecting over it is the crowning splayed-out member. Its curved middle part is carved with a row of oblong panels. Separated by plain spaces, the panels are decorated each with an eight-petalled flower.

At the bottom of the two sloping members flanking the steps there is a moulded base projecting from the

pilaster of the parapet and resting on a portion of the parapet itself. There is a socket (or chase) provided within the top surface of this base. It might have held the tenon of a pillar or a pilaster (against the wall of the parapet).

PLATFORM.—The platform is in two tiers. The lower terrace, which is larger, is squarish on plan. Its façade is moulded. Above the footing is a plain course. Receding from it is another plain course, projecting over which is a quirked ovolo capped by a receding fillet. Receding from the last is a plain course, over which is a massive projected moulding in the form of a filleted torus with a straight receding fillet below and above.

The treatment of the moulded façade of the upper platform, which is, however, *tri-ratha* on plan, is similar to that of the lower. The uppermost course, above the receding plain course, appears to have been splayed out as in the moulded façade of the parapet of the staircase. A portion of this topmost course with damaged façade is available at the north-eastern corner.

SANCTUM.—Very little of the wall of the sanctum has survived. Externally, the sanctum is *tri-ratha* on plan, while the interior is squarish. All the *kanika-pagas* of the exterior wall are shaped like pilasters resting on a course running on all sides. The bases of the pilasters have, above a plain vertical part, a torus moulding with a receding facet below and above. Over this is a broad recess capped by a filleted torus. The crowning moulding is a splayed-out member with a receding facet above. The superstructure above this is missing.

The state of preservation of the central projections, which are separated from the *kanika-pagas* by a thin recess, is even worse. Even the base-mouldings are disturbed. To judge by the dislodged members, the façade of the central projection on three sides had two broad pilasters at either extremity. The treatment of these pilasters appears to have been analogous to that of the pilasters of the *kanika-pagas*. The shaft of the pilasters with mouldings at the base supported a heavy capital. The latter was a succession of two splayed-out members. The base of the upper member was relieved with a *gaṇa* (centre) flanked by winged animals. Above this are two gradually projecting facets capped by a row of panels bearing alternately an eight-petalled flower. The entablature over the capital, to judge again by the dislocated stones lying by the sides of the temple, bore a succession of friezes. Projecting above a facet, the lowest frieze had a row of lion-heads supporting brackets; the intervening trefoil niches contained each the figure of a *haṁsa*. Over this frieze was a plain facet surmounted by a row of panels, alternately containing an eight-petalled flower. Projecting above the plain surface over it was a row of elephant-heads, the niches in between being filled in with a *haṁsa* each. Above was a creeper containing within its foils birds and other motifs. Next was a row of bells spaced by oblongs. The projecting plain band over it was crowned by a row of panels, alternately containing an eight-petalled flower. The entablature presumably held the lowest portion of the framework supporting the triangular roof of the niches, possibly meant for the images of the *pārśva-devatās*.

The pair of pilasters on the three central projections framed a wide recess which had a large trefoil arch. The oblong niche provided within this arch, which rested on faceted jambs, probably contained each the image of a *pārśva-devatā*.

The front side of the outer wall of the sanctum has a moulded pilaster at the two *kanikas*. Separated by a thin recess, the middle part has two pilasters, moulded like the *kanika-pagas*, one each at either flank. The side of these two pilasters facing the open space in front of the entrance-door has a moulded projection at the base. The narrow wall between the pilaster (on each flank) and the flanking wall of the door-opening was relieved with a succession of miniature shrines with triangular roofs resting on pilasters. The trefoil niche within contained a figure, possibly of a deity. One of these miniatures has partly survived on the northern flank. Between these two flanks is the floor of a narrow antechamber which had presumably a triangular roof. The door-jambs, resting on a plain sill, are faceted. The narrow wall beyond the jambs was perhaps relieved with miniature shrines or panels. The sanctum had a single door facing the west. Its roof was, no doubt, pyramidal and made of slabs.

No trace of the image, which had been under worship within the sanctum, could be found. Daya Ram Sahni noticed two fragments of a pedestal, which might have supported the image, in the eastern portion of the courtyard. From the recorded size (about 43 cm. long, 33 cm. wide and 30·5 cm. deep) of the mortice which held the tenon, it is clear that the image was a large one.

From the find of several smaller images of four-headed and four-armed Vishṇu in his excavation at the Avantisvāmin temple, Daya Ram Sahni felt that the principal image in the sanctum was of this form. The best-preserved among the images of this class was discovered at the north-west corner of the courtyard, not far from the central shrine. Its pedestal (about 84 cm. × 48·2 cm. × 40·7 cm.) lay near it.

This particular image (pl. XII)[1] preserves all the characteristic features of this class of images. Carved in the round, the image of fine workmanship has four faces: the principal face, with a mark between the eye-brows, is benign and represents Vāsudeva-face; the right face is leonine and stands for Saṅkarshaṇa; the left face is that of a boar and symbolizes Aniruddha; and the fierce-looking Kāpila face with *jaṭābhāra* on the rear signifies Pradyumna. Of his four hands, the upper right and left carry respectively the stalk of a full-blown lotus and a conch-shell, while the corresponding lower hands rest above the heads of Gadā-devī (personified mace) and Chakra-purusha (personified wheel), both holding a *chāmara* with their right hand. Between the stretched legs of the image is the upper portion of Pṛithvī, the Earth-goddess, emerging from the pedestal, with her palms touching the feet of the god. The main figure is draped in a *dhotī* held by a belt to which is attached a small sword or dagger. A folded scarf encircles the thigh.

[1]The image now stands on the verandah of the Gadādhara temple at Srinagar. Since its shifting from Avantipur, the image has been retouched; thus the boar-head as seen in this plate is a re-fashioned one.

With the *kaustubha* jewel on the bosom and an *upavīta*, the image is bedecked in a long *vana-mālā*, a beaded *hāra*, *valayas*, armlets, finger-rings, flower-shaped *kuṇḍalas* and a richly-embellished elaborate crown.

Four-headed images of this type are called Vaikuṇṭha, Chaturvyūha and Chaturmūrti.

(*iii*) *Subsidiary shrines and structures*

CORNER-SHRINES.—As already noted, the temple was conceived as *pañchāyatana*, as seen from the symmetrical layout of the four smaller shrines, one at each corner of the courtyard. Facing the western direction, all of them, of identical dimensions, are stripped of their superstructure. To judge by the available portion, they were contemporaneous with the main temple. The best-preserved among these shrines is the one at the south-western corner. Approach to its single square platform is provided by a flight of steps, possibly with a sloping member at either extremity, edged by the moulded parapets. Both the parapets are fronted by a pilaster with a moulded base, the latter having a projection facing the stair. The façade of the platform, above a plain vertical course, is moulded with a bold quirked ovolo, receding above which is a plain vertical course capped by a projecting splayed-out moulding resembling an inverted *khurā*. The lowest portion of the wall of the northern side of the shrine proper, which is *tri-ratha* externally and squarish internally, is alone available. The base of the pilaster of the *kanika-paga* has three mouldings (quirked ovolo, filleted torus and inverted

khurā) above a plain vertical part, the latter being carved out of the upper portion of the base-course of the sanctum-wall. Each of the three *rāhās* (central projections) has at either extremity a pilaster with its base, moulded like that of the *kanika*-pilasters. On the inner side of the pilaster are two receding vertical facets. Beyond these facets, on the inner side, is a recess, beyond which is a thin pilaster with a moulded base. The pair of thin pilasters, presumably, supported the architrave projecting above the lintel of the frame of the niche. Above the architrave was most probably a trefoil arch framed by a triangular roof. The jambs of the oblong niche beyond the thin pilasters are faceted. Within the niche was perhaps an image of the *pārśva-devatā*. On the floor of the sanctum of this particular shrine is a monolithic oblong moulded pedestal with the façade of the projected spout relieved with the head of Garuḍa. It is very likely that the mortice of the pedestal held the tenon of an image of Vāsudeva.

The preservation of the three remaining shrines of this group is much worse. From the available evidence it appears that they resembled the south-western one in architectural features. The spout of the pedestal, found close to the north-eastern shrine, is carved with the head of a *makara* having a beaded string suspended from its snout. Daya Ram Sahni felt that this shrine was dedicated to the river-goddess Gaṅgā whose *vāhana* (mount) is a *makara* (crocodile). Spouts with *makara*-heads are not only common throughout India but found in temples of various creeds. However, such type of spouts occurs in the outer mouth of the channels that

drain out the washings from the sanctum to outside. If the *makara*-spout of the pedestal of the image has any cult-significance, then the image which had been placed on this pedestal most probably was that of Pradyumna with whom the *makara* is particularly associated. If this presumption is correct, it is very likely that the remaining two shrines had images of Saṅkarshaṇa and Aniruddha. In that case the four shrines were dedicated to Saṅkarshaṇa, Vāsudeva, Pradyumna and Aniruddha, the combined Chaturmūrti Vishṇu having been in the central temple. Daya Ram Sahni noticed the lowest portion of an image fitted to the pedestal belonging to the south-eastern shrine. In this fragment there are three pairs of feet, the flanking pairs belonging to the attendants and the middle pair to the principal Vaishṇava image. Between the feet of the last is the bust of the Earth-goddess.

TWO LATER SHRINES.—Apart from these four shrines, there are a few other subsidiary structures including two shrines of a later date. These two shrines on the back side of the temple between the north-eastern and south-eastern corner-shrines described above are preserved up to their moulded platforms. With mouldings similar to those of the corner-shrines, these platforms are, however, *tri-ratha* on plan. They are reached by a staircase, provided on the western side. Subsidiary platforms approached by stairs are found against the three sides of the platform of one shrine and the rear side of the platform of the other. Evidently, they are later additions to provide easy access to the images of the *pārśva-devatās*

in the niches of the central projections. The shrine by the side of the south-eastern shrine has a moulded oblong monolithic pedestal on its floor. If at all this pedestal belongs to this shrine, it is not in its original position, as its spout faces northward, while the channel to drain out the washings exists in the southern wall.

MAṆḌAPA.—In front of the staircase of the main temple is a squarish pavement edged by a low kerb. The latter has at four corners as well as in its central parts sockets which evidently held the tenons of pillars. The arrangement would indicate the existence once of a large *maṇḍapa*, possibly open on all sides. On the paved floor of this *maṇḍapa* rests a square stepped (gradually receding upward) pedestal with the lower portion of the base of a free-standing pillar. The latter, most probably, supported on its top the figure of Garuḍa, the mount of Vishṇu.

The builder of the temple took care for draining water from the paved courtyard outside by providing a stone-built drain which ran out below the wall between Cell nos. 66 and 67.

(*iv*) *Cells and their fronting colonnade*

Around the courtyard is arrayed a range of small cells, erected on a fairly high basement running on all the four sides. The total number of cells is sixty-nine including the two (at north-western and south-western corners) outer ones which face the west. Raised on the same basement, which projects in front of the cells, is a

row of columns (pl. VI A) running on all sides and supporting the roof projecting from the top of the cells.

The inner side of the basement and the outer façade of the two flanks of the front (west) side of the basement are relieved with mouldings similar to those of the lower platform of the main temple. The exterior side of the other three flanks has merely a roughly-dressed projected course in line with the topmost moulding of the front side. The basement has inconspicuous projections in front of the central cell of three sides and at north-western and south-western corners.

The running back wall of the cells has at regular intervals inconspicuous oblong pilasters resting on a base-course which projects beyond the vertical wall of ashlar masonry. Both the flanks of the back wall of the cells of the front (west) side are preceded by a colonnade perched on the basement. The number of columns on these two flanks is twenty including the four which stand on the projected part of the basement in front of the north-western and south-western corner-cells. These pillars along with the sixty-six of the seventy-six columns (excluding the two which are connected with the gate-way) in front of the cells facing the courtyard are of a uniform pattern. Their base is in the form of a circular *khurā* above a plain square block, while the shaft has sixteen flutes. Rising above two facets is the circular and gadrooned capital, above which is a splayed-out member in gradually-projecting facets. The remaining ten pillars (four at the corners and two each flanking the central cell of the three sides facing the courtyard) are squarish in section. With a *khurā*-shaped square base,

these pillars have a panelled shaft (meant to be decorated, but left unfinished) and a splayed-out faceted capital. Above the last is a splayed-out architrave, faceted corbelwise.

It is very likely that the roof of the ranges of cells was triangular and constructed of large stone slabs in two rows meeting at the ridge with the exception of the corner-cells at the front wing and the middle one of three remaining wings. These five cells as well as the solid masonry at the two remaining corners were perhaps crowned by a double-tiered pyramidal roof. The side walls of the three central cells are thicker than those of the remaining cells.

All the cells, possibly with the exception of the three central ones, have each a trefoil door-opening above the sill which is merely a course rising above the floor of the projected part of the basement and the top of which is flush with the floor of the cell. Around the arched door-opening are four facets, beyond which are ornate pilasters. The architrave above each pilaster supports, apart from a *kinnara*, a portion of the base of the triangular pediment in two tiers.

The base of these ornate pilasters has usually a set of four mouldings, while the capital, rising above two facets, is gadrooned with beaded lines in the flutings. Above the capital is a splayed-out member relieved with petals. The splayed-out architrave over it has on its upper façade a row of lotus-petals and on the lower façade a row of dentils capped by brackets, the recessed parts in between having trefoil niches.

The treatment of the shafts of the pilasters is not

only varied but particularly ornate and luxuriant. At least nine broad types of decorative treatment can be distinguished. In the first type there are oblique flutings with beaded lines in the grooves. The second is a succession of *āmalaka*-shaped members with vertical beaded lines in the grooves. In the third type is a vertical succession of broad zigzag lines; between these zigzags are beaded zigzags, leaves, also arranged in zigzags, and scrolls. The fourth type consists of interwoven beaded fillets to form clusters of diamond-shaped compartments, each bearing within six-petalled flowers. The fifth design is highly elaborate: at the base is a row of seated atlantes in the attitude of supporting a superstructure, above which is a lotus; next is a gadrooned member with beaded lines in the flutings; next is a row of gracefully-moving *haṁsas* capped by a lotus; next is again a gadrooned member with beaded lines; next is a row of parrots capped by a lotus; next is once again a gadrooned member with beaded lines; further up is a row of crane-like birds crowned by a lotus; next is again a gadrooned member with beaded lines; next is a row of *rāja-haṁsas*, one pair carrying a garland; next is again a gadrooned member with beaded lines; next is a row of doves (or swans) capped by a lotus; next is again a gadrooned member with beaded lines; and the topmost is a row of birds crowned by a lotus. In the sixth type are oblique flutings, the fillets in between decorated with beaded lines, creepers, leaves and flowers. The seventh is a vertical series of lotuses, each alternating with a gadrooned member with beaded lines. In the eighth pattern there are three vertical rows of beaded circles,

almost touching one another; within the circles are variantly a swan, a six-petalled flower and a diamond-shaped flower; the space between four circles is filled in with a diamond-shaped flower. The ninth is in segments: at the base of each segment is a lotus capped by a row of *haṁsas*, above which is a horizontal row of three structures with their triangular roof resting on carved pilasters; within the niches of these structures are standing figures, mostly of gods and goddesses including Gaṅgā and Yamunā; by the sides of the triangular roofs are *vidyādharas* with garlands in hands.

Beyond the decorated pilasters flanking the door-openings is a set of gradually projecting vertical facets. The segments of walls between these sets of facets have each a broad, plain and oblong pilaster with a base-projection. In front of these pilasters, but at a lower level, stand the pillars of the peristyle.

The cell immediately to the west of the central cell of the northern side had originally a regular door-opening in its back wall. This is suggested not only by the vertical facets on the exterior sides of the opening but by the two circular sockets on the floor, one each near the side walls and the jambs. These sockets are, no doubt, meant for the posts of a wooden door. The provision of this back door of the cell would indicate that there was an annexe behind the northern row of cells. Possibly this annexe consisted of a kitchen, store, scullery and other allied structures. This particular cell originally had in front of it a landing (facing the courtyard) approached by steps built against the moulded façade of the basement. There might have been a similar landing with

a stair in front of the central cell of the northern, southern and eastern sides.

On the floor of the central cell of the eastern side stands *in situ* the spouted pedestal of the missing image. The cell immediately adjoining its southern wall also bears now a spouted pedestal. Pedestals are also seen within a few other cells. These facts would indicate that most of the cells, though not of easy access due to the narrow space in front of them and intervening pillars, served as shrines.

(*v*) *Gateway*

Access to the courtyard is provided by an imposing gateway (pl. VIII A) erected over a fairly high basement or platform. The platform, *tri-ratha* on plan, has mouldings similar to those of the lower platform of the main temple.

STAIRCASES.—The gateway is approached by a staircase from the west. A second staircase against the eastern side of the basement descends down to the paved courtyard. The treatment of both the staircases is identical. Thus, immediately by the two sides of the flight of steps is a sloping member, which, however, does not run down to the bottom step, but stops with a moulded base projecting from the parapet.

Beyond the sloping member, on either side, is a raised parapet. The latter's outer side wall presents mouldings similar to those of the parapets of the staircase of the main temple. Both the parapets are also

fronted by a short stunted pilaster each. With a moulded base, the shafts of these pilasters present panels. The panel on the front side of the northern pilaster of the western staircase contains the seated figure of Kāmadeva in the company of his two consorts within a five-foil arch perched above two pilasters, as in the panels of the pilasters of the staircase of the main temple. Of the four hands of Kāmadeva, the upper right and left hands carry flowery arrows and a bow respectively, while the lower right rests on a staff. The corresponding panel of the southern pilaster of the western staircase is missing. The two panels of the pilasters of the eastern staircase depict a seated amorous couple in the company of two musicians, one playing on a lute and the other on a lyre. Perched on the two bottom foils of the arch is a *kinnara*, above which are scrolls. The side of the pilasters facing the steps of this very staircase (eastern) depicts a Vaishṇava *dvāra-pāla* holding a mace in one of the two hands. The bejewelled figure wearing a long garland stands with flexions. The corresponding figure on the available northern pilaster of the western staircase also appears to be a *dvāra-pāla* with his left arm resting on a staff. The decoration of the capitals above the panels is analogous to that of the capitals of the pilasters of the staircase of the main temple.

PILLARS AND PORTICOS.—The western staircase leads to the top of the platform which supported twelve imposing pillars distributed along the edge, one each at four corners and two in the middle part of the four sides. Of these pillars, only the western one of the middle pair

of the northern side is alone intact and *in situ*. Rising above plain square blocks, the circular base of these pillars is *khurā*-shaped. The shaft with twenty-four flutings supports a gadrooned capital with beaded lines in the grooves. Above the capital is a carved splayed-out member, faceted corbelwise. The middle portion of the lowest oblique facet is relieved with scroll-work. There is a row of parrots in the next oblique facet. The broad facet over this has a row of stunted pilasters (presenting the appearance of dentils) capped by brackets; the recesses in between appear like arched niches. The curved part of the topmost facet is relieved with a row of petals.

It appears that the two middle pillars of each of the four sides supported the roof of a narrow portico with a triangular roof projecting from the lower tier of the pyramidal roof of the gateway. A portion of the architrave which supported the lowest portion of the triangular roof is available on the top of the splayed-out member above the capital of the extant pillar of the north side. This portion of the architrave projects forward from the northern wall of the front compartment of the gateway behind the northern pilaster. The façade of two sides (western and eastern carved, northern face broken and southern going into the wall) of this architrave with gradually rising sides is relieved with horizontal friezes, each projecting from the other. The bottom frieze appears to be a row of brackets, the niches in between containing each a full-blown flower. In the next there is a series of petals. The third bears a row of lion-heads supporting brackets, the latter relieved with

creepers; the trefoil niches in between accommodate each a *haṁsa*. In the fourth there is a line of parrots. The fifth presents a row of elephant-heads, the niches in between having a *haṁsa*. In the sixth there is a series of oblong panels alternately containing an eight-petalled flower. The topmost frieze is a row of atlantes supporting a superstructure with two hands, each punctuated with a *haṁsa* (within a recess). The pillars at the four corners of the platform were probably free-standing.

OUTER AND INNER COMPARTMENTS.—As in the case of the full-fledged quadrangular Buddhist monasteries, the gateway is partitioned into two compartments of identical size with the door-opening provided in the central part of the partition-wall. Both the outer (front) and inner (rear) compartments are open on the side facing the outer and inner staircases. On this side there are four pillars in one line with the massive pilasters attached to the side walls of the compartments. The two central pillars of both the compartments are similar in design to those on the platform of the gateway. Rising above moulded bases, the shafts of the remaining two flanking pillars of the two compartments are oblong. None of the shafts is *in situ*, but their fragments may be seen on the floor of the courtyard. Three sides of these shafts are vertically faceted and decorated, while the fourth side which faced the side wall is left uncarved. The decoration of the central broad band of these sides is bold and exquisite. In the bands of two sides are creepers. The band on the broader side which faced the pillars is relieved with a vertical row of circles with

beaded borders. Within these circles are various figures, like a pair of lions touching each other with snouts, an amorous couple, a pair of composite animals with the head of a *haṁsa*, a rider on a lion and the like. The triangular spaces adjoining the circles are filled in with half flowers.

The two masonry pilasters (pl. IX) of the outer and the inner compartments are massively built and thicker than the walls. Rising above a low stone course, on which also rested the four pillars, the base of the pilasters of both the compartments consists of three mouldings (a succession of quirked ovolo capped by a thin receding fillet, a filleted torus and a splayed-out moulding with its *khurā*-shaped upper part) above a plain vertical course capped by a thin receding fillet. The three sides of the shaft of the pilasters are decorated with a vertical succession of miniature structures (two on the side facing the pillars and three each on the remaining two sides) in relief above an oblong panel, the latter immediately above the base-mouldings. The faceted frames of these panels are decorated with scroll-work and a row of diamonds containing within and outside flowers and half flowers. In the panels is Kāmadeva in the company of his two consorts flanked by either a female or a lion at either extremity. The right hand of Kāmadeva in three of the extant panels rests on a staff with a flower at the base. All the miniature structures carved in relief on the pilasters, with the exception of four (the upper one of the side of the pilasters facing the pillars of the compartments), have a sort of a portico with a triangular roof projecting from the lower

tier of the triangular roof of the miniature structures. While the shafts of the pilasters supporting the roof of the structures are oblong with a decorative scroll or creeper in the central panel, the shafts of the pilasters of the porticos are circular with various decorations like oblique flutings and others. Within the trefoil niches of these structures are standing figures, badly defaced and damaged.

As already noted, the side of the pilasters facing the pillars has two miniature structures in relief. The roof of the upper miniature structure, above the trefoil niche perched on pilasters, is not available. On the other hand, the damaged face of the course above the course bearing the trefoil niche of the southern pilaster of the inner compartment is found to project considerably towards the row of pillars. It is, therefore, likely that at this level there was an architrave which ran over the capitals of the four pillars. Above this architrave was possibly the trefoil arch which was framed by the triangular roof of the portico in front. The topmost triangular roof of the miniatures on other sides rises above the level of the architrave. These miniatures are arrayed within oblong frames. The splayed-out capital over the topmost panel supported an architrave carved like the architraves over the pillars of the porticos on four sides of the gateway. This architrave was at a higher level than the architraves over the porticos and supported the base of the double-tiered pyramidal roof of the gateway.

The two side (inner) walls of both the outer and inner compartments of the gateway are lavishly carved (pl. IX), the workmanship of the exuberant carvings

being of great artistic merit and full of rhythm. In fact, these walls present the vast pageant of an effective array of decorative motifs, rendered with the skill of ivory-carvers and jewellers. The layout of the decoration is practically identical in all the walls. Above the roughly finished plain course in alignment with the sill of the door-frame is a broad band relieved with a row of full-blown flowers within circular borders, each flower flanked by a pair of half flowers (pl. VIII B). The semicircular moulding above it is obliquely fluted; the oblique bands between the flutings are carved with flowers, creepers and scroll-work. The receding facet above it is capped by a broad band divided into three compartments by a row of four moulded pilasters. In the central compartment is a standing male flanked by two females, beyond whom is a lion pouncing upon an elephant. In the side compartments is a man with folded hands flanked by two *kinnaras*. Beyond the outer *kinnara* is a lion facing. Above the band in compartments is a plain facet, projecting above which is a row of lion-heads supporting brackets relieved with leaves; there are trefoil niches in between. Projecting above this is a semicircular moulding capped by a splayed-out band relieved with oblong panels, alternately containing eight-petalled flowers. Receding above this are three receding facets, the topmost relieved with scroll-work; these facets run vertically as well along the walls. Above the topmost facet is a broad horizontal panel; frames on its three sides are relieved with a row of eight-petalled flowers within diamond-shaped compartments, each separated by a pair of half flowers; in the top frame is a

scroll-work. The panel is relieved with a row of nine connected circles with half flowers in the triangular spaces. Within the circles are four-armed *gaṇas* with two natural hands joined in *añjali-mudrā;* the remaining hands hold variously a garland, the stalk of a flower, a *ghaṭa* and a crown. Projecting above the panel is a row of elephant-heads supporting brackets relieved with leaves; the resultant trefoil niches in between are filled alternately with a *haṁsa* and a plant motif. The semi-circular moulding above this is capped by a splayed-out member relieved with triangular half-flowers. Perched above this splayed-out member is the representation of a miniature shrine with a triangular roof in two tiers. The roof rests on pilasters with moulded bases, oblong shafts relieved with *gaṇas* within circles with half flowers within triangular spaces and splayed-out gadrooned capitals; the entablature over the capitals supports, besides a *kinnara*, the framework below the roof of the lower tier. From the lower tier projects forward the triangular roof of the portico which rests over the splayed-out carved entablature above the gadrooned capitals of the shafts of the pillars with moulded bases. The decoration of these shafts is lavish; some have gadrooned members alternating with lotus-shaped segments. Perched on the entablature are birds. Within the trefoil niche framed by the portico is the figure of a standing deity. The two figures in the side walls of the inner compartment are weathered beyond recognition. The one in the northern wall of the outer compartment is the river-goddess Gaṅgā gracefully standing on a lotus above a *makara* and carrying the stalk of a lotus in

her right hand and a water-pot in her left hand. One of the companions of the goddess holds an umbrella over her head. The corresponding deity in the niche of the southern wall of this very compartment is Yamunā standing also on a lotus but above a tortoise. One of her companions too holds the stick of an umbrella spread over her head. Around the miniature shrines are faceted frames. The innermost facet of the sides is relieved with a vertical succession of shrines with a triangular roof, each shrine separated from the other by an oblong panel relieved with a plant motif. In the niches of the trefoil arches resting on decorated pilasters are standing figures. The next facet is relieved with a row of flowers, each within a diamond-shaped compartment. There are half flowers in the triangular portions caused by the array of these diamonds. The recess beyond this facet is relieved with scroll-work.

Both the sides of the two flanks of the partition-wall (pl. XI) which provides the door-opening are also exuberantly carved. The central part of each flank, bordered by vertical bands and facets, presents a vertical succession of three miniature shrines with triangular roofs in two tiers above an oblong panel. The frame of the panel is relieved with scroll-work and a series of diamonds containing within full-blown flowers and outside half flowers; these motifs continue as well on the facets or pilasters of the frame around the miniature shrines. The inner facet (carved with diamonds bearing flowers) supports a splayed-out carved capital. The projected panel within the frame contains the figure of Kāmadeva in the company of his two consorts, all seated

and two-armed. In one (on the northern flank of the outer compartment) of the four panels (one each on the four flanks) Kāmadeva carries in his left hand a drinking bowl which has been placed at the mouth of the consort on his left. In two panels (both on the flanks of the inner compartment) one of the hands of Kāmadeva rest on a long staff with a flower at the base. There is a pair of birds slightly above the head of Kāmadeva and carved in the centre of the facet (relieved with scroll-work) of the frame. Above the frame is a projecting row of lion-heads, separated from one another by niches. The projected splayed-out member above this supports the base on which rest the pilasters of the bottom miniature shrine. These pilasters have moulded bases, decorated shafts (some gadrooned with beaded lines in the flutes, some again with oblique flutings with beaded lines), gadrooned capitals with beaded lines in the grooves and splayed-out entablature carved with lotus-petals, stunted pilasters and other motifs. On the entablature rest the base of the frame of the triangular roof and a bird. Within the trefoil niche of all the miniature shrines is the standing figure of a deity. Unfortunately, the figures are so weather-worn that they practically defy identification with the exception of two. These two are within the niches of the bottom miniatures of the two flanks of the outer compartment. The one on the northern flank represents the bejewelled Gaṅgā wearing a long garland and standing on a lotus above a *makara*, a composite animal. In the left hand of the goddess is a water-pot, while in the right is the stalk of a lotus. Of the two female companions one carries an umbrella

over the head of the goddess. The bejewelled figure on the southern flank is Yamunā, also wearing a long garland and standing on a lotus above a tortoise. In her right and left hands are respectively a water-pot and the stalk of a full-blown lotus. Here, too, one of the two female companions holds an umbrella over the head of the river-goddess. Flanking each of the shrines are two pilasters, carved with diamonds containing within and outside flowers and half flowers. The splayed-out capitals of these pilasters are in the form of two inverted *khurās*, the body of the upper inverted *khurā* being relieved with scroll-work or creeper. The two broad bands beyond these two flanking pilasters are relieved with scroll-work. The next broad (most projecting) band on both sides of the miniatures is boldly relieved with figures. The one at the base is a four-armed *gaṇa* with two hands folded and with the remaining two hands supporting the superstructure. Above the *gaṇa* is a vertical succession of standing human figures, either single or in pair in amorous dalliance. The single figures mostly represent *alasa-kanyās* or *nāyikās*. There are four gradually rising facets beyond the recess flanking the outer side of the two most projecting bands. The second of these facets is relieved with scroll-work.

The door-jambs beyond the inner of the two most projecting facets are faceted. The three broad facets are relieved, one with a row of beaded diamonds having beaded half diamonds in between and the other two with scroll-work. More than half of the thickness of the side (facing the door-opening) of the jambs has been conspicuously bevelled with the result that the space

between the jambs becomes wider and wider as one goes towards the inner compartment. This device is apparently to keep away as much as possible the wooden door-leaves when flung open. There is a square horizontal socket in the side facing the opening of both the jambs, the socket in the southern jamb being very deep. These two sockets held the bar which bolted the wooden door.

The broad door-sill supporting the jambs is plain. That the wooden door had two leaves is apparent from the existence, in the door-sill, of two large circular sockets for holding the door-posts.

(*vi*) *Detached images*

Most of the images found in the excavation of the Avantisvāmin temple are now in the Sri Pratap Singh Museum at Srinagar. As already noted, the majority of the unearthed images represent Vishṇu. Unfortunately, only four (all carved in the round) out of these Vishṇu images preserve their head. The best preserved (pl. XII) of these four has already been described (p. 48). The remaining three are in the Sri Pratap Singh Museum. Made of highly polished black stone, these three images with four heads (placid, leonine, Kāpila and boar-like) and four arms are similar to the best preserved one. One (Catalogue no. Aa 21) of these three images holds the stalk of a lotus in his upper right hand; the damaged object in the corresponding left was, no doubt, a *śaṅkha;* the lower right and left hands rested on the heads of Gadā-devī (broken) and Chakra-purusha. The lower part of the legs including the

pedestal is missing in these three images, all of them having a dagger attached to the belt.

A headless four-armed image (AC 44) of Vishṇu standing on a moulded pedestal has been associated with the images actually unearthed at Avantipur on account of the stylistic considerations. The exact find-spot of the image, which was purchased from a silver-smith, is not known. The upper two hands carry a lotus (broken) and a conch-shell, while the lower two rest on the heads of Gadā-devī and Chakra-purusha. Between the legs of the god is the upper part of the Earth-goddess emerging from the pedestal. A single-headed image of Vishṇu bearing a close similarity to this image is now in the Museum of the University of Pennsylvania. A. K. Coomaraswamy, who has published the image, feels that it might have hailed from Avantipur.[1]

Of the other images of Vishṇu only small fragments are available in the Museum. Two of these fragments preserve the lower parts of the legs with the figure of the Earth-goddess in between and the *chāmara*-bearing Gadā-devī (upper part missing in one specimen) and Chakra-purusha (also upper part broken in one specimen). Some of the fragments preserve merely either the figure of Gadā-devī or Chakra-purusha.

Among other images found at Avantipur two are particularly noteworthy. One (AC 2), found in the premises of the Avantisvāmin temple itself, preserves the lower portion of an image of Ardhanārīśvara wearing a long garland, an anklet round the left ankle alone,

[1] *The Museum Journal*, University of Pennsylvania, XVII, March, 1926, pp. 91-93.

bangles around the wrist of the extant left hand (holding a water-pot) and finger-rings. Behind the standing figure is a humped bull, while by the sides are the four-armed Gaṇeśa and the six-headed and six-armed Kārttikeya, both standing.

The exact spot of Avantipur where the other image (AC 8) had been found is not known. Bearing the stamp of the late Gupta art idiom, the three-headed image with its well-modelled rounded plasticity, graceful poise and peaceful contemplative facial expression of all the three faces is of compelling beauty. Wearing a long garland, the figure is draped in a transparent *dhotī* (?) and a scarf made of antelope-skin, closely sticking to the body. The ascetic character of the figure is emphasized not only by the lack of ornaments but by the matted hair gathered on the crowns of all the three heads. The object in the upper (rear) left hand, the only hand intact, is a stick with knots (probably a *tridaṇḍaka*), also an ascetic attribute. The missing attributes in the three remaining hands were perhaps *abhaya-mudrā* or *vyākhyāna-mudrā* (front right), rosary (rear right) and a water-pot (front left).

The image, which possibly represents Śiva, appears to be earlier than the time of Avantivarman. The find of this image at Avantipur lends credence to the statement of Kalhaṇa that the place, before the foundation of the town, enjoyed sanctity as a holy *tīrtha* resorted to by people at the approach of death with the hope of obtaining a heavenly life. Apparently, this sacred place had religious establishments prior to the foundations raised by Avantivarman.

In the Museum für Indische Kunst at Berlin there is a fine bronze image[1] bearing a close affinity with this sculpture not only in the number of hands and matted head-dress but in stylistical treatment and modelling. It is not unlikely that this particular bronze too was discovered at Avantipur itself. The bronze, however, is single-headed. Bereft of ornaments, the ascetic figure, which stands on a moulded pedestal, wears an animal-skin and a long garland and carries a rosary in its lower right hand, a staff (with upper part broken) in the upper left and a water-pot in the lower left, the natural right palm being in *vyākhyāna-mudrā* or *abhaya-mudrā*. Of the four attendants standing on the pedestal, all bereft of ornaments and with a circular halo behind their heads, one appears to be bull-headed and presumably stands for Nandi. From the evidence of the palaeography of the inscription on the pedestal it is ascertained that the image is not later than the eighth century A.D.

D. Avantīśvara temple

This temple too is situated by the side of Jammu-Srinagar highway, near the hamlet of Jaubrar about a kilometre to the north-west of the Avantisvāmin temple.

The temple was conceived on a colossal scale, but, for reasons unknown, the decoration was left unfinished. The damage and spoliation suffered by it are greater than those of the Avantisvāmin temple.

[1]Herbert Härtel, *Indische Skulpturen* (Berlin, 1960), pp. 74-76, pls. 44 and 45; *Katalog 1971 Ausgestellte Werke*, Museum für Indische Kunst, Berlin, 1971, Kat. Nr. 101, pl. 22.

(*i*) *Layout of the temple-complex*

Facing the west, the complex consists of a *pañchāyatana* temple in the middle of an oblong courtyard, two subsidiary shrines (one each at the north-eastern and south-eastern corners), a quadrangular array of cells around the periphery of the courtyard and a double-chambered imposing gateway in the centre of the western row of cells in two flanks.

(*ii*) *Main temple*

What of this temple now remains is merely its *tri-ratha* platform. Even the top courses of this high platform are missing. However, to judge by the dimensions of the platform, the temple appears to have been an imposing one. Against the four central projections are built four high and spacious staircases, suggesting thereby the possibility of the existence of four doors of the sanctum. Attached to the four corners of the platform is the small platform of a subsidiary shrine. Thus, the temple was of the compact *pañchāyatana* type. It appears that the staircases, with the exception of the western one (the main approach), and also the four subsidiary shrines at corners were not parts of the original scheme contemplated at the initial planning stage. This is indicated not only by the unbonded masonry of these staircases and the platforms of the subsidiary shrines but also by the fact that the roughly-fashioned decorative architectural motifs and the mouldings of the façades of the platform of the main temple have been covered by these staircases

and subsidiary platforms. There is no trace of the last having any independent staircase attached to them. Presumably, the shrines over these platforms were approached from the top of the main platform which provided a narrow access to the platforms of these shrines. The three staircases and the subsidiary shrines, which were the result of an afterthought, however, do not appear to have been far removed in date.

The façades of the main platform have a set of mouldings at the base. Apparently, there was another set or a very broad splayed-out moulding at the top. The conspicuously-high recessed portion between these two sets of mouldings is relieved with a row of miniature shrines punctuated by oblong pilasters (with moulded bases) with facets in between. The pair of pilasters supporting the roof of the miniatures rests on an oblong common base. Resting on a splayed-out member (supporting a bird or a *kinnàra*) above the splayed-out capitals of the pair of pilasters is the double-tiered triangular roof of the miniature shrine in relief. The raised portion within the niches of these shrines was meant to be carved with images and figures.

The find of numerous carved and finished architectural members would indicate that the main sanctuary above the platform was more or less finished in decoration. The decorative scheme in certain cases appears to have been somewhat different from that of the Avantisvāmin temple. Thus, the treatment of the capital of some of the fluted pillars which have *ghaṭa*-shaped bases is elaborate. Over the fluted shaft are beaded tassels and pendants, above which is a row of triangles with half

flowers capped by a beaded line, over which is a garland crowned by a vase-and-foliage capital. Above the capital are two gradually projecting mouldings (torus below and inverted *khurā* above), over which is a member with *ratha*-projections, the central projections bearing various motifs including *vidyādharas* carrying garlands. One of the architectural members, lying on the top of the platform, presents a portion of a trefoil arch having by its side the representation of the façade of a *chaitya-gṛiha* with its superstructure resting on pillars; the miniature temple is flanked by a standing female. Another architectural member depicts the standing figure of Lakulīśa with in a trefoil niche between pilasters, the latter probably supporting a triangular roof. Bereft of ornaments, but wearing a garland, Lakulīśa holds a staff (*lakuṭa*) with-his left hand which rests against the thigh and displays *abhaya-mudrā* or *vyākhyāna-mudrā* with his right palm (holding a rosary ?).

Among the architectural members lying by the northern side of the temple, the relief flanking a projecting band and a facet on a large oblong stone is particularly interesting. The relief (pl. XIII B) depicts a standing couple, apparently Avantivarman himself and his queen. The intense religious fervour and profound devotion are admirably depicted on both the faces with eyes nearly closed due to the concentration on spiritual thoughts. Draped in a *dhotī* and a scarf worn in an *upavītī* fashion, the moustached and bearded king is sparsely decked in single-stringed beaded *valayas*, *aṅgadas* and a *hāra*, possibly all made of *rudrākshas*. The artist has succeeded in delineating the king in a modest attire

befitting one entering a holy shrine. While the right hand of the king is raised above his left shoulder in *vandanā-mudrā*, the left is hanging down. The graceful queen, with a short *mukuṭa* among other unassuming ornaments, stands with two palms folded in *añjali-mudrā*. A scarf is seen covering her head. The space above her head is occupied by the upper portion of a figure holding a long garland.

(*iii*) *Cells*

Around the main temple is a spacious oblong courtyard surrounded by cells on all the four sides. Because of the gateway in the centre of the western side, the cells in this wing are in two flanks. All the cells, with the exception of two, one each at the north-western and south-western corners, face the courtyard. These two particular cells face the forecourt in front of the gateway. Against the back wall of the ranges of cells were shallow oblong pilasters. The faceted door-jambs had a pilaster with a moulded base by their side. There were twenty-two cells (in two flanks), including the two corner-cells, in the western wing. The walls of the cells of the other three wings have practically disappeared.

The cells are raised over a running basement which has projections in front of the central cell of three sides and of the north-western and south-western corner-cells. The façade of the basement facing the courtyard and outer face of the western flanks of the basement facing the forecourt have mouldings; the recessed course above the quirked ovolo is crowned by a projected inverted *khurā*-shaped moulding.

The top of the two flanks of the basement of the western side provides a sort of a ledge facing the forecourt. On this ledge stood twenty-six pillars (in two flanks) including the two pairs in front of the two corner-cells which face the forecourt. These pillars were right in front of the shallow pilasters built against the back wall of the cells of the western wing. The lowest portions of some of these pillars (mostly on the northern flank of the western side) are alone *in situ*. Among the available fragmentary pillars, the one near the northern wall of the gateway has a squarish moulded base and a shaft (squarish in section) panelled by facets with a pilaster-motif in the middle part. It is very likely that the corresponding pillar near the southern wall of the gateway and the two near the corner-cells are of this very pattern. The remaining pillars have a fluted shaft and a *khurā*-shaped base rising above an oblong block. Possibly there were no pillars in front of the cells facing the courtyard.

(*iv*) *Gateway*

Built on a moulded *tri-ratha* base and approached by two staircases (one facing the forecourt and the other the courtyard), the gateway (pl. XIII A) is partitioned into two compartments, the door-opening being in the middle portion of the partition-wall. The layout of the gateway is like that of the Avantisvāmin temple, but this gateway is on a smaller scale. However, there is only a pair of pillars instead of four in the two compartments. Further, the decoration is left unfinished. The four corners of the gateway are conceived as pilasters with a

set of mouldings at the base. Above these base-mouldings is an unfinished panel capped by a succession of four miniature reliefs of shrines with their double-tiered triangular roof resting on pilasters; the figures within are left uncarved. Each miniature shrine is within an oblong faceted panel.

The inner sides of both the compartments present a framed panel above the base-mouldings. Here also the decoration on the facets and the central broad band has been left uncarved. Above the panel is the representation of a miniature shrine with the triangular roof in two tiers resting on pilasters; from the lower tier projects forward the triangular roof of its portico with pillars. No attempt has been made to reproduce decorations and figural sculptures.

Similarly, the façades of the partition-walls have been left unfinished after making some broad vertical bands and facets.

To judge by the circular sockets on the door-sill which rises above the floor of the two compartments, there was a double-leafed wooden door. The inner side of the southern jamb preserves a very deep squarish socket which used to hold the bar for bolting the door.

4. MARTAND

THE LOFTY PLATEAU (LAT. 33° 44′ 40″ N.; LONG. 75°13′ 20″ E.; District Anantnag), on which the remains of the ancient temple of Mārtaṇḍa stand, overlooks the modern village of Matan (also called Bavan), located at its foot. The name of the village is derived from the name of the presiding deity (Mārtaṇḍa or Mārtāṇḍa) of the temple on the plateau which is also known as Matan or Martand. The plateau (locally called *uḍar* and *karewa*) itself is connected with the slope of a mountain.

The site selected for the temple is indeed superb and fascinating not only in its setting vibrating with beauty but in its atmosphere of reposeful serenity. Immediately behind the temple, which stands on the highest part of the plateau overlooking the lovely plains below, rises up a mountain. The slope of this mountain at the rear of the temple commands a picturesque panoramic view of the spendid valley, with its soothingly green corn-fields in a large part of the year and groves of deep-green trees, encircled by high snow-topped reposeful mountains with their lower part covered by majestic trees. A more fitting and nobler site could hardly be chosen for the mansion of the sun god, the spanner of the universe. Undisturbed by modern buildings and unobscured by trees, the temple shines in its solitary grandeur.

A. Historical background

There is a controversy about the builder responsible for the construction of the temple. A. Cunningham, on his own interpretation of two (III, verse 462 and IV, verse 192) of the verses of the *Rājataraṅgiṇī* of Kalhaṇa, attributed the central temple to either King Raṇāditya of the restored Gonandīya dynasty or one of his predecessors and the peristyle to Lalitāditya-Muktāpīḍa (*circa* A.D. 724-60). Cunningham went to the extent of suggesting that the main temple (Mārtaṇḍa) was constructed by a predecessor (possibly Āryarāja) of Raṇāditya and the two annexes (on the north and south flanks of the *maṇḍapa*) were built by Raṇāditya and his queen Amṛitaprabhā and were called as Raṇapurasvāmin and Amṛiteśvara. According to him, these three structures were erected between A.D. 370-500.

The verses in question are as follows:

khyātiṁ Raṇapurasvāmisaṁjñayā sarvato gatam ।
sa Siṁharotsikāgrāme Mārtaṇḍaṁ pratyapādayat ॥ (III, 462)

sokhaṇḍitāśmaprākāraṁ prāsādāntarvyadhatta cha ।
Mārtaṇḍasyādbhutaṁ dātā drākshāsphītaṁ cha pattanam ॥
(IV, 192)

M. A. Stein, who considered the interpretations of Cunningham as erroneous, furnished the following translations of these verses.

'He (i.e. Raṇāditya) built at the village of Siṁharotsikā a [temple of] Mārtaṇḍa which became famous everywhere under the name of Raṇapurasvāmin'.

'That liberal [king i.e. Lalitāditya-Muktāpīḍa] built the wonderful [shrine] of Mārtāṇḍa, with its massive walls of stone within a lofty enclosure (*prāsādāntar*), and its town swelling with grapes'.

According to Stein's interpretation and also translation,[1] the temple of Mārtaṇḍa under the name of Raṇapurasvāmin is distinct from the present temple at Martand and the latter temple along with its enclosure was built by Lalitāditya-Muktāpīḍa. Stein's view has been accepted practically by all scholars. On architectural considerations also, the existing temple above the platform appears to be contemporaneous with the surrounding peristyle. The present façade of the platform of the temple covers to some extent an inner façade. The interval between the constructions of these two façades does not appear to be long enough to warrant the attribution of the inner platform to Raṇāditya and the enlarged part to Lalitāditya-Muktāpīḍa.

Kalhaṇa's next reference to Mārtaṇḍa is in connexion with the death of King Kalaśa (A.D. 1063-89) of the First Lohara dynasty. This dissolute king, notorious for his wicked ways, once destroyed the copper image of Sūrya called Tāmrasvāmin. During his last illness he thought of repairing to a *tīrtha*. In the belief that Sūrya had been enraged by the destruction of the image of Tāmrasvāmin, he went to the temple of Mārtaṇḍa where he offered a gold image of the god for the prolongation of his life. However, within a few days he breathed his last right in front of the image of the Mārtaṇḍa temple

[1]The translation furnished by R. S. Pandit agrees closely with Stein's rendering.

where, at his bidding, he had been carried by his ministers.

Mārtaṇḍa is mentioned again by Kalhaṇa in his account of the spoliation of temple-treasures and divine images (for their metal-value) at the instance of the greedy Harsha (A.D. 1089-1101), son of Kalaśa, who was 'addicted to extravagant expenditure upon various corps of his army'. This king is stated to have respected only two chief divine images—'the illustrious Raṇasvāmin in the City (i.e. capital), and Mārtāṇḍa [among the images] in townships'. This statement in the context of the robbing of temple-treasures and images for replenishing the exchequer would indicate that the image of Mārtaṇḍa was of metal.

The last notice of Mārtaṇḍa by Kalhaṇa relates to his own time during the reign of Jayasiṁha (A.D. 1128-55) when the place became the scene of a sanguinary battle between the royal troops under Sañjapāla and the forces of Trillaka. It is stated that when Sañjapāla had become unconscious due to the shock of a fall from his charger on a hard ground, he was carried off, out of the midst of the enemy, by his two warrior sons who placed him within the quadrangle of the Mārtaṇḍa temple.

The image of Mārtaṇḍa continued to have been in active religious worship till about the end of the fourteenth century A.D. when it was desecrated and destroyed at the instance of Sulṭān Sikandar (A.D. 1389-1413). Jonarāja specifically mentioned Mārtaṇḍa among the images broken by this Sulṭān. From the statement of this court-chronicler that the converted Sūhabhaṭṭa, the chief instrument of the Sulṭān in the work of destruction

of the temples, did not leave any important temple, whether in city, town, village or wood, unbroken, it appears that the Mārtaṇḍa temple was wrecked at this very time and the temple ceased to be living for ever.

The next notices of Mārtaṇḍa (not as a temple but as a locality) by Jonarāja relate to the reign of Sulṭān Zainu'l-'Ābidīn (A.D. 1420-70) whose irrigation-works in Mārtaṇḍa-*pattana* are narrated in some length. This benevolent Sulṭān caused juicy sugar-canes planted in the land of Mārtaṇḍa-*deśa*. From these references it is evident that the temple lent its name to the plateau and possibly also to the land adjoining its base.

Mārtaṇḍa is mentioned even in the fourth chronicle (*chaturthī Rājataraṅgiṇī*) by Prājyabhaṭṭa and Śuka who continued the chronicle of Śrīvara from the reign of Sulṭān Fatḥ Shāh (A.D. 1486-93, 1505-14 and 1515-17) to the conquest of Kashmir by the Mughul emperor Akbar (A.D. 1556-1605). Thus, during the last part of the reign of Muḥammad Shāh, in about A.D. 1533, there was a battle fought between the army of the Sulṭān and the invading troops (under Mīrzā Ḥaidar Dughlat) of Sulṭān Sa'īd Khān of Kashghar at the foot of Mārtaṇḍa (near present Bavan or Matan). Next Mārtaṇḍa is mentioned in the context of the severe and widespread earthquake of A.D. 1554 which wrought havoc in Kashmir during the reign of Sulṭān Ibrāhīm Shāh (or Ismā'īl Shāh according to some) during the ascendancy of Daulat Chak. It is related that the inhabitants of Vijayeśvara, Mārtaṇḍa and Varāhakshetra did not experience fear from the earthquake due to the sanctity of these *tīrthas*. The *tīrtha* in respect of Mārtaṇḍa in this

period refers to the one at the sacred springs (in the present village of Matan or Bavan) near the base of the plateau of Mārtaṇḍa. Śuka's last reference to Mārtaṇḍa is in connexion with the bounties lavished by Akbar during his first visit to the valley. The emperor went to Mārtaṇḍa when he made a gift of cows adorned with pearls and gold to the Brahmins.

Abu'l-Faḍl in his *Ā'īn-i-Akbarī* has left a short notice of Matan, then a small *parganah* populated by Brahmins. The passage in question has been translated by H. S. Jarrett in the following terms.

'Matan stands upon a hill and once possessed a large temple. There is a small pool on the summit, the water of which never decreases. Some suppose this to be the *Well of Babylon*, but at the present day there is no trace of anything but an ordinary pit.

'On the slope of the hill is a spring, at the head of which a reservoir has been constructed, full of fish. The sanctity of the place preserves them from being touched. By the side of it is a cave, the depth of which cannot be ascertained.'

From the above account it is quite clear that in the time of Akbar, the temple was already reduced to ruins. While the above-mentioned cave refers to the one at Bumazuv, the spring and the tank are the existing ones at Bavan (Matan) which is considered by the Hindus as a *tīrtha* sacred to Mārtaṇḍa. M. A. Stein has referred to a legend narrated in the *Mārtāṇḍa-māhātmya* connecting the springs 'with the story of the production of the sun from the lifeless egg (*mṛtāṇḍa*), which Aditi, the wife of Kaśyapa, had brought forth as her thirteenth

child'. The *Nīlamata-purāṇa* mentions this *tīrtha* of Mārtāṇḍa.

B. Previous work

From the published reports of travellers it is evident that the remains were widely known and warmly appreciated even in the early nineteenth century. Thus, Moorcroft, who visited Karawe Matan from Islamabad in 1823, has left a glowing account of the ruins 'of very remarkable extent and character', locally termed at that time, as in the cases of many other ancient structural remains, as 'Khana Panduwa, a house or palace of the Pandus' (the epic heroes). Moorcroft furnished a broad but fairly accurate description of the general layout. According to him, the two small wings flanking the main building (rather the *maṇḍapa*) were formerly connected with the centre by a colonnade. He concluded his description with the following remark. 'In its present condition the palace of the Pandus is a precious specimen of ancient art, and deserves a foremost place amongst the remains of Hindu antiquity'. He also got prepared some drawings (possibly by G. Trebeck who accompanied him) of the edifice and referred to the local report regarding the former existence of a large city on a part of Karawe Matan.

Charles Hügel, who referred to the temple-complex near Matan as Korau Pandau, left the monument undescribed. He noted the existence of a dry ruined aqueduct 'which formerly conveyed the water from the mountains to the plain'.

The temple of 'Martund' (commonly called Pandu-Koru by the people at that time) received an eloquent tribute from G. T. Vigne: 'As an isolated ruin, this deserves, on account of its solitary and massive grandeur, to be ranked, not only as the first ruin of the kind in Kashmir, but as one of the noblest amongst the architectural relics of antiquity that are to be seen in any country.' Vigne dealt with the temple in great length and published some good sketches, from which it is seen that the entire platform of the temple, its floor, the courtyard and the basement of the ranges of the cells and colonnade were engulfed by stones and rubbish at that time. He felt that the two detached wings (flanking the *maṇḍapa*), 'shaken out of the perpendicular', 'were merely ornamental, and were joined by a flying buttress to the upper part of the centre building, particularly as the remains of part of an entablature, projecting from the top of the left wing towards the centre building, would seem to countenance such as opinion'.

Much more substantial and scholarly is the treatment of A. Cunningham who described in great length the visible portion of this massive temple located at the northern end of the *karewa* of Matan. According to him, the temple was called at that time Pāndavon-ki-laré (house of the Pāṇḍus) by the Brahmins and Matan by the people. He took great pains in reconstructing the history of the temple from Kalhaṇa's chronicle and also in furnishing an idea of the missing superstructure of the main temple and the surrounding cells with the colonnade in his drawings. That the plan of the entire complex suffers from several major inaccuracies is due

to the lower portion of the complex having been engulfed by débris. His presumption that the whole of the interior of the quadrangle was originally filled with water and the temple was negotiated with a raised pathway made of slabs resting on solid blocks at short intervals might have also been due to this very reason.

The short notice by W. G. Cowie who saw the temple in 1865 is intended to be a supplement to the account of A. Cunningham. His observations are mostly in respect of measurements. He referred to a rectangular building close to the temple. He also published two line-drawings, one depicting the decoration on the soffit of the five-foiled arch between the *maṇḍapa* and *antarāla*, and the other representing two stone pillars of the rectangular building.

In his brief introduction to his illustrations H. H. Cole did not add anything to what had been stated by Cunningham and in fact blindly followed the latter as regards the authorship and dates of the temple-complex. However, the fine photographs published by him are a valuable documentation of the temple as it stood in A.D. 1868.

Depending mostly on the accounts and illustrations of earlier scholars, James Fergusson gave his own impressions on the temple-complex. According to him, the roof of the temple was in wood. He did not entertain the idea of Cunningham that the quadrangle was originally filled with water and was in favour of Stein's view that the entire temple-complex was the work of Lalitāditya-Muktāpīḍa.

The notice of J. Ph. Vogel, who visited the valley in

1903, is in the form of a short inspection note dealing with measures required for the preservation of the temple.

The report of Daya Ram Sahni, though not long, is precise. He felt that the roofs of the temple and its adjuncts were not only pyramidal but made of stones.

The description of Ram Chandra Kak is mostly quotations from the accounts of A. Cunningham and Daya Ram Sahni. However, at his instance, started the clearance of the area within the enclosure of the temple which was completed by Madhusudan Kaul. In the absence of the detailed report of this excavation, it has not been possible to have an idea about the nature of antiquities unearthed. Among the movable antiquities he mentioned only the large earthen storage jars which may now be seen both on the floor of the courtyard and embedded within the floor. Among the architectural features brought to light by the clearance of débris around the temple, he has referred to a very significant one—the existence of two bases, 'one *within* the other, on the east side of the temple'. This led him to presume that the inner base supported an earlier temple of somewhat smaller dimensions which might have been built by Raṇāditya. However, it is felt that the interval between the construction of this base (which is in fact traceable on all sides) and its enlarged part which advances outwards is not so much as to justify the ascription of the base to Raṇāditya and the enlarged part to Lalitāditya.

Among the later studies, the one by Percy Brown

is particularly erudite and enlightening from the architectural point of view. In tracing the various alien inspirations, ideas and techniques which went into the consummation of the Kashmiri architecture in the Mārtaṇḍa temple, H. Goetz not only found in its architectural features and details a complete 'Roman-Byzantine character, specially of the Syrian type of the fourth-sixth centuries' but went to the extent of propounding that Lalitāditya engaged Byzantine architects to execute his ambitious plan of erecting temples of exceptional size. Most of the arguments put forward by him in favour of his theory do not stand close scrutiny. Assimilation of certain extraneous elements in respect of some architectural details in the temple is, no doubt, palpable, but these inspirations were received by the valley at an earlier period from its neighbouring countries, particularly Gandhāra which influenced Kashmir considerably, and the architects and artists from Gandhāra found a warm shelter in the valley. It is also difficult to agree with the view of Goetz that the roof of the temple was of wood decked with gilt copper sheets, as amidst the débris there are fragments of roof-stones. Goetz was of the opinion that the two supplementary shrines (flanking the *maṇḍapa*) were later additions of the early ninth century A.D. when the façade of the basement of the main temple received additions in the form of a series of small chapels which covered 'the beautiful late Gupta reliefs on the original plinth of the temple'. The projections of the original plinth itself would bear the evidence to the erection of these two structures along with the main temple with its *antarāla* and *maṇḍapa*.

C. Mārtaṇḍa temple

This imposing temple (pl. XIV), even in its present state, overwhelms the visitors with its massiveness, solidity, simplicity and dignity. Exuding strength and grandeur, it bears the impress of the forceful and dynamic personality of the mighty emperor Lalitāditya-Muktāpīḍa who launched Kashmir on an ambitious career of far-flung, but ephemeral, conquests not merely in a large part of India but in Turkestan and Tibet and raised its status as a formidable power viewed with awe and admiration by the contemporary rulers. The reign of this restless emperor is equally eventful in the sphere of building art, as he lavished the increased resources of the country, in the form of booty taken from enemies in his expeditions and tributes from vassal states, on the constructions not only of new towns and his capital at Parihāsapura but of a large number of temples all over the valley in order to ensure his everlasting glory.

The daring architects, recruited by Lalitāditya-Muktāpīḍa who wanted to outshine others in the field of monumental constructions too, were required to give effect to his grandiose scheme. That they became eminently successful in this mission is proved by the Mārtaṇḍa temple itself which is one of the few surviving temples of Lalitāditya's time. By their judicious composition of not only of different members of the temple proper but also of the components of entire complex of the Mārtaṇḍa temple, these architects succeeded in creating the impression of a colossal temple of soaring height, though in reality the temple is practically of

average height if compared to the high temples in other parts of India. The secluded site of the temple on the elevated plateau has added considerably to the effect of grandiosity. Imbibing the spirit of a warlike age, the temple, though of a titanic conception in the use of gigantic stones, lacks refined finish requiring time.

Forming a landmark in the history of the temple-architecture of Kashmir, the Mārtaṇḍa temple represents the very apogee of the typical Kashmiri architectural style. Its importance is further enhanced by the fact that none of the extant temples, whether contemporaneous or later, can compete with it in dimensions and grandeur. It is generally held that this temple served as the model for those in the succeeding ages and that this particular form of architecture owed its origin due to the drive and genius of Lalitāditya-Muktāpīḍa. There is, no doubt, that the building art received a great fillip due to the active patronage of this ambitious ruler. It is also likely that the distinctive regional style was consummated at his instance.

At the same time it is difficult to believe the sudden emergence of this fully-developed type without any primitive beginning and evolutionary phases. The constructions of a good number of temples in the pre-Kārkoṭa period are recorded by Kalhaṇa. The temple of Bhūteśa to whom Lalitāditya is stated to have presented eleven crores on his return from conquests had already been standing before he started the construction of the Jyeshṭharudra temple near it. It is reasonable to assume that Kashmir had progressed

considerably in evolving her own characteristic type of temples before the Mārtaṇḍa temple was constructed. In view of the existence once of earlier shrines and those built by Lalitāditya, his ministers and princely attendants and ladies of his seraglio, it cannot be claimed that the Mārtaṇḍa temple alone served as a prototype or model for the later temples to emulate in respect of layout, architectural features and decorative schemes. At his capital Parihāsapura itself, Lalitāditya erected not less than four imposing temples in honour of Muktākeśava (a golden image), Parihāsakeśava (a silver image), Mahāvarāha (with a golden armour) and Govardhanadhara (a silver image) and a Garuḍa-standard, fifty-four cubits high. Unfortunately, all these temples are now reduced to amorphous ruins. From the dimensions of the utterly ruined peristyle of two of the temples on the *karewa* of Parihāsapura, it is evident that these two temples (possibly Parihāsakeśava and Muktākeśava) were larger than the Mārtaṇḍa temple.

The amount of damage suffered by the Mārtaṇḍa temple, though not as much as most other temples which were on the main ancient routes or located near the capital, is considerable. Added to the vandalism of men who even removed the flooring slabs, were the destructive forces of nature unchecked by periodical repairs and maintenance following the removal of the images, desecration and desertion of the temple. The process of destruction was further accelerated by the poor and friable quality of the limestone susceptible to disintegration and exfoliation. The extreme weathering

of the standing wall-surface is due to the snow-fall and frost which have played havoc with the removal or fall of the roofs.

The temple was constructed of neatly dressed ponderous slabs of stone, arranged in horizontal courses with fine joints. Iron dowels and cramps were used in binding the stones. The principle of corbelling was adhered to in respect of spanning; the topmost opening of the trefoil arch was covered by an enormous T-shaped slab. The facing of the pyramidal roof was also made of horizontal courses of stones.

(*i*) *Layout of the temple-complex*

The main temple (pl. XIV) is located within a spacious oblong courtyard enclosed by a raised basement supporting a roofed colonnade with an array of cells behind The entrance to the quadrangle is gained through an imposing double-chambered gateway, provided in the middle of the front row of cellular peristyle. Thus, the general layout is of the normal pattern of the Kashmiri temples. What, however, distinguishes this temple from other extant ones is the component parts of the temple proper. In other instances, the temple is a single chamber with or without a sort of a narrow portico in front. But here, not only does this temple consist of an oblong *garbha-gṛiha* (sanctum sanctorum), an *antarāla* and a spacious full-fledged *maṇḍapa*, but it has two double-chambered side wings flanking the *maṇḍapa*, a novel and special character of its own. All these components are erected on a single

basement or platform. In front of the staircase leading to the *maṇḍapa* is a shallow tank. The small shrines near the corners of the basement of the courtyard are later additions.

(*ii*) *Main temple*

As already noted, the temple (pl. XV), consisting of a sanctum, an *antarāla* and a *maṇḍapa* flanked by two small double-chambered wings, is erected on a high platform. Approach to the top of the platform is provided by a flight of steps flanked by a sloping member on either side. The base of the exterior side of the parapets is relieved with a heavy quirked ovolo, below which is a plain straight plinth receding from another straight course below. Above the quirked ovolo and receding from it is a plain vertical dado with two courses extant. The mouldings at the top have disappeared.

PLATFORM.—The singular feature of the platform is its façade enveloping largely an inner façade. The carved and sculptured wall of this inner façade singles out the outer one as an addition. This has raised a problem about the interval of time between the two constructions which is difficult to be sorted out on account of the conservative character of the Kashmiri art and architecture. R. C. Kak suggested that the inner platform supported an earlier temple of somewhat smaller dimensions, probably built by Raṇāditya, and that on the ruins of this temple was constructed the present temple by utilizing the earlier base and enlarging it by an

envelope. It is difficult to uphold this view which envisages not only the inner platform belonging to an earlier temple but this earlier temple too being a complex of a sanctum, an *antarāla*, a *maṇḍapa* and two flanking wings, as the size, alignment and the two projected parts of the western flank of the northern and southern sides of this inner platform would indicate. The inner platform appears to belong to the existing temple-complex. It is not unlikely that the enlarged envelope was made shortly in the wake of the construction of the temple, as the builder found the narrow platform unbecoming of a temple of such a magnitude. The manner in which the enlarged part was added also favours this view; thus not only was the visibility of most of the images in relief of the inner façade ensured but they were protected from the inclemencies of weather by providing a covering with covered cell-like recesses in front. Some of the decorations on the façade of the inner platform are unfinished and the reliefs are also comparatively well-preserved in portions where they are still being hidden or shaded by the enlargement.

The inner platform has three major projections, one in the central part of the back (eastern) side and one each in the western flank of the northern and southern sides. Its exposed available façade is relieved with a row of pilasters at regular intervals. Rising above a plain projected band, the bases of the pilasters are composed of a band-like plinth, a quirked ovolo, a filleted torus and a splayed-out moulding. The shafts of the pilasters are plain and oblong. The lowest portions of the wide spaces between the pilasters have been designed into

oblong panels. Within these panels and at two extremities are two dwarf pilasters with an uncarved space in between.

Above these panels are reproduced in high relief miniature shrines with triangular roofs, of which the lower tier alone has survived at places. Rising above an inverted *khurā*-shaped member, the two pilasters of each miniature shrine have bases moulded like those of the main pilasters. The treatment of the shafts of the pilasters of the miniatures is both lavish and varied: some have oblique flutings with beaded lines in the grooves; others have a succession of accentuated *āmalaka*-shaped members, each separated by a disc-like member with bevelled sides; some again have a succession of zigzags, the spaces in between being filled in with beaded lines; still others are grooved, the segments being alternately *āmalaka*-shaped with beaded lines in the grooves and lotus-petalled. The shafts are crowned each by a gad-rooned (somewhat *āmalaka*-shaped) member with beaded lines in the grooves. Above this capital is a splayed-out member with a band around the middle part. This supports a member with its splayed-out lower part relieved with dwarf pilasters with bracket-tops punctuated with trefoil niches and the curved upper part simulating an inverted *khurā*. From the pair of two architraves, on which is perched either a *kinnara* or a *kinnarī* of fine workmanship, rises up the triangular roof.

The recessed spaces between the pair of pilasters of the miniature shrines are fashioned into trefoil niches with faceted frames, each containing the image (in relief) of a deity often in the company of attendants.

There appears to have been thirty-seven images in all, representing various deities of the Brahmanical pantheon including Sūrya, Śiva, Vishṇu, Brahmā, Pārvatī, Gaṅgā, Yamunā and Dikpālas. The best-preserved among these images is the one of Sūrya (pl. XVI B) riding a horse (facing), accompanied by Daṇḍī and Piṅgala, his usual companions. Wearing long boots and a crown with three projections, the four-armed and moustached deity wears ornaments (including heavy ear-ornaments), a coat of mail and coiled locks of hair. The identifiable attributes in the hands are lotuses.

In its second phase, the façade of the platform (pl. XVI A) projects forward to a width of nearly 130 cm., the enlarged portion covering the apron round the original part of the platform. Up to a height of about 1 m., the masonry of this enlarged part is solid. The façade of this portion has a moulded base and top. Rising above a plain plinth with a projecting footing below, the base has a large quirked ovolo with a receding fillet above. The top part consists of three gradually expanding fillets (middle one bevelled) crowned by an inverted *khurā*. The recessed portion (dado) between the base and the top is panelled by pilasters with moulded bases and tops, the topmost member being splayed out. Between these pilasters there are niches, trefoil and corbelled, showing men and women, mostly single and sometimes in amorous pairs. These figures are shown in various roles, some playing on musical instruments like cymbals, flutes, lyres and drums, some seated in a relaxing mood and some others absorbed in thoughts.

The enlarged portion of the platform further above

is not solid due to the provision of cell-like recesses with partition-walls in between. These cells are intended to be small shrines, as the niches bearing the images of the inner platform-façade form mostly their back walls. At some places, particularly near the corners, these images have been covered by masonry, and, thus, the back wall of the cells at these particular places is plain. Probably, these cells housed detached images. The door-jambs of the cells, which face the courtyard, are faceted and support the trefoil arches, open within. These jambs are flanked by pilasters with moulded bases, faceted shafts and gadrooned capitals (with beaded lines in the grooves) supporting splayed-out members with a central band; above the last is a projecting block, over which is an inverted *khurā* supporting a bird and also the bottom of the triangular roof. The segments of walls flanking the pilasters have a moulded base. Above this base, in the segments near the corners, is the representation of the façade of a temple having a triangular roof supported on pilasters with moulded bases and plain shafts. Only at one place the lower tier of the triangular roof has survived. The façades of the wall-segments at other places are faceted, the middle facet being broadest.

The upper portion of the enlarged part of the platform is missing. Somewhat above the level of the triangular roofs, which were, no doubt, in two tiers, was evidently a set of gradually projecting mouldings crowned perhaps by an inverted *khurā*. Over this was the flat top of the platform which runs on all sides of the temple.

INTERIOR OF THE MAṆḌAPA.—The top of the platform, approached by the staircase, gives access to the square *maṇḍapa* through a spacious and lofty opening simulating a *toraṇa* with a trefoil arch resting on two jambs (or masonry pilasters). The sides of the two jambs facing the opening have a base relieved with mouldings. Above this base is a broad oblong panel containing a frieze of *gaṇas*, each within an arched niche with pilasters. Over this panel is the representation of the façade of a structure with a triangular roof in two tiers (upper tier having a horizontal member within) crowned by a globular pinnacle. The roof rests on two pilasters with a moulded base and grooved shafts. The segments of shafts between these grooves are alternately gadrooned (with beaded lines in the flutes) and bearing lotus-petals. Within the trefoil niche of the miniature structure is a six-armed figure standing with flexions and wearing a long garland. The lowest right hand of the figure on both the jambs appears to rest on a staff or a mace. Two of the hands of the figure on the southern jamb carry a *triśūla* and display *abhaya-mudrā*. As the other attributes are not clear, the figures could not be correctly identified. Above the roof of the miniature is again a broad panel with a horizontal frieze having small figures within niches made by pilasters and trefoil arches. Receding above this panel is a moulding with splayed-out sides from which springs up the imposing trefoil arch. The inner curved side (intrados) of the trefoil arch is divided into three broad compartments running side by side. In the central compartment is a series of diamonds, each within a squarish panel, apart from a full-blown lotus right at the topmost

part; the diamonds and the panels are richly carved with floral and other motifs. The flanking compartments are relieved with a row of full-blown lotus-medallions of bold workmanship, each within a squarish panel with corners filled in with floral motifs. The eastern face of the jambs is left plain up to the level of the entablature.

The northern and southern walls of the *maṇḍapa* provide each a doorway leading to the platform outside in front of the two double-chambered wings. These two side doorways have faceted jambs sloping outwards and panelled lintels. The narrow architrave over the lintel is relieved with projecting panels and supports a triangular roof in two tiers. Within the lower tier is accommodated a trefoil niche. The latter contains, within, the relief of a three-headed seated deity, badly defaced. Two of the attributes in the hands of the figure on the southern side appear to be a wheel and a conch-shell. This particular figure thus represents Vishṇu. The two side door-openings had each a double-leafed wooden door, sockets for the posts of which exist on the sill.

The two side walls between the doorways and the jambs of the western opening are decorated with the miniature representation of a shrine with a double-tiered triangular roof crowned by a globular member. Perched on the entablature below the lower tier are birds. Relieved with dwarf pilasters and niches in the lower part and a projecting panelled band in the upper part, this member rests on the moulded capitals of two pilasters with moulded bases and oblong plain shafts. Projecting forward from the roof of the lower tier and descending down is another triangular roof (of a sort of

portico of the miniature shrine) with a horizontal member tying the two sides of the roof at the middle height. This roof is also supported by the capitals of pilasters with moulded bases and decorated shafts, similar to those on the entrance-jambs described above. The base of both the miniature shrines is relieved with mouldings. The broad recess (dado) between the torus and the uppermost moulding in the form of an inverted *khurā* is boldly carved with a central seated figure (in the attitude of supporting a superstructure) flanked by birds (or *kinnaras*), lions and elephants. At either end of the recess is a pilaster with a moulded capital.

Within these two miniature shrines in relief is a trefoil niche bearing the multi-headed figure of a standing deity. Daya Ram Sahni identified both with Vishṇu. Unfortunately, both the figures are badly weather-worn. That the figure of the deity on the northern wall stands for Vishṇu is proved by its leonine and boar-like side heads representing Saṅkarshaṇa and Aniruddha; being in relief, the back Kāpila head (representing Pradyumna) is not visible; the front placid face stands for Vāsudeva. Decked in ornaments and a long garland, the god stands with an inconspicuous flexion, along with his two companions, on a double-petalled lotus. Between the legs appears the bust of Pṛithvī. The attributes in his hands are not very distinct. The attributes in the hands of Vishṇu Chaturmūrti (also called Chaturvyūha and Vaikuṇṭha), according to the *Vishṇu-dharmottara-purāṇa*, are a *gadā* (mace) and a *chakra* (wheel) in Vāsudeva-hands, a *musala* (club) and a *lāṅgala* (ploughshare) in Saṅkarshaṇa-hands, a *śara*

(arrow) and a *chāpa* (bow) in Pradyumna-hands and an *asi* (sword) and a *charma* (leather-shield) in Aniruddha-hands. According to the *Aparājitapṛichchhā* and other later texts the attributes are a mace, a wheel, a lotus, a conch-shell, an arrow, a bow, a sword and a shield. In these prescriptions thus the lotus and conch-shell (the attributes in two other hands of Vāsudeva) substitute those of Saṅkarshaṇa. From old photographs of this relief it appears that above the man-lion-boar heads there is a pile of seven more heads in three rows, two rows having three each and the top only one. In that case, the image most probably stands for Viśvarūpa Vishṇu.[1]

The three-headed figure (pl. XVIII A) within the miniature shrine of the southern wall most probably represents Mahādeva, and not Vishṇu as noted by Daya Ram Sahni; for, the side faces are not animal-like. The right face of the figure is rather fierce-looking. Possibly it stands for Aghora-Bhairava. The corresponding left face would, thus, represent Vāmadeva-Umāvaktra. In the *Vishṇudharmottara-purāṇa* we have a description of the five-faced form of Mahādeva, the front, right, back,

[1]An elaborate image (ten-armed) of this type in the precincts of the temple of Chaṅgu Nārāyaṇa (Nepal) has been fully described by Pratapaditya Pal (*Bulletin: Museum of Fine Arts, Boston*, LXV, 1967, no. 340, pp. 45-52). The lion-head and boar-head are, however, absent in this image. Of the two forms of Viśvarūpa described in Chapter 83 of the *Vishṇudharmottara-purāṇa*, one is noted as similar to that of Vaikuṇṭha. In the other form, which has a large number of faces including those of Maheśvara and Brahmā, the lowermost head is four-faced. According to the *Aparājitapṛichchhā*, the four faces (man, man-lion, Śrī and boar) of Viśvarūpa are identical with those of Vaikuṇṭha, but Viśvarūpa is twenty-armed.

left and top faces named respectively Sadyojāta (also Mahādeva), Aghora (also Bhairava), Tatpurusha (also Nandivaktra), Vāmadeva (also Umāvaktra) and Īśāna (also Sadāśiva). Corresponding to five heads are ten hands, the attributes being a rosary, a staff, a trident, a blue lotus and an arrow in right hands and a *kamaṇḍalu*, a *mātuluṅga*, a shield, a mirror and a bow in the left hands. While the top head is usually left unrepresented, four faces are depicted only in the fully round sculptures. In relief normally three heads are visible as in the celebrated image of the so-called Trimūrti of Elephanta. Flanked by two companions, the present figure appears to have eight hands, carrying probably a rosary, a *kamaṇḍalu*, a staff, a *mātuluṅga*, a blue lotus, a mirror, a trident and a shield, the attributes of Sadyojāta, Aghora-Bhairava, Vāmadeva and Tatpurusha.

Slightly above the level of the top of these miniature shrines is a broad entablature which runs in its full height uninterrupted on the northern and southern sides. On the remaining two sides it has to give way to the rearing trefoil openings with the result that only its uppermost portion runs continuously, the remaining portion being broken by the central openings.

The design of the entablature is conceived effectively. Projecting from the vertical wall, its lowest member is decorated with a row of lion-heads supporting trefoil arches, the spaces within the arched niches containing carved motifs (*haṁsa* on a lotus-leaf ?). Above this member is a projecting horizontal band with a series of flowers (each within an oblong compartment), separated from one another by plain squares. Slightly receding

from this is a plain broad band supporting a frieze. Thus, resting on the band is a row of pilasters with moulded bases and capitals supporting a running lintel. The resultant oblong panels formed by these pilasters is relieved each with a cinquefoil arch resting on brackets above the *āmalaka*-shaped capitals of the shafts of two pilasters with moulded bases. Within the niches formed by these arches and pilasters are the weather-worn figures of deities. Both the northern and southern walls have each six such figures, all two-armed and seated with legs crossed, on double-petalled lotuses. The attributes in their hands being indistinct, they do not admit of identification, though one feels tempted to identify these twelve figures (in two walls) with the twelve Ādityas. There are two such unidentified figures within cinquefoil niches on the western (front) wall as well. Of the two corresponding niches on the eastern wall, one contains the damaged figure of Sūrya, flanked by attendants, on a chariot with the charioteer Aruṇa holding the reins of seven horses. The figure (or figures) within the other niche (on the dexter) is completely damaged. Above the lintel of the frieze is a projecting member relieved with lion-heads from which spring up trefoil or cinquefoil arches, the resultant niches being empty. Above this member is a band panelled into compartments.

The superstructure above the entablature is missing. How the ceiling, which might not have been far above this entablature, was spanned is not known.

The two flanks of the back (eastern) wall of the *maṇḍapa* is extremely narrow due to the provision of the

large trefoil arched opening with its height equal to that of the front one. This trefoil arch rests on splayed-out imposts with their lower member relieved with lion-heads and arched niches and the upper member with panelled flowers. Below the imposts are built-up pilasters with moulded bases and capitals. The front (west) side of these pilasters is plain. On this face there are flying *vidyādharas* by the side of the lower foils of the trefoil arch.

The side of the two shafts facing the opening bears a succession of three representations of miniature shrines with double-tiered triangular roofs resting on pilasters. Each of them contains a standing figure within a foiled arch and is framed by an oblong border. These framed miniatures are separated from one another by a panel with three dancing *gaṇas*, some with musical instruments. The bottom side of the trefoil arch is relieved with large panelled lotus-medallions, alternating with diamonds, also within squarish panels, filled in with motifs.

INTERIOR OF THE ANTARĀLA.—The ceiling of the oblong *antarāla* was arched in the form of a trefoil. The two side walls are boldly relieved each with a miniature shrine having a double-tiered triangular roof supported on splayed-out members above pilasters with moulded bases and capitals. Within the trefoil niche inside the miniature on the northern side is the river-goddess Gaṅgā (pl. XVII A) standing gracefully with bodily flexions above a *makara*. In her slightly raised left hand is a *ghaṭa* (water-pot), while in the right hand is the stalk of a lotus. She is flanked by two attendants, one holding

the stick of an umbrella spread over her head. The corresponding figure on the southern side represents Yamunā above a tortoise in the company of her two attendants, one as usual with an umbrella. Above the miniatures is a pair of flying figures holding a crown. Still higher is a course projecting forward from the vertical wall. It is relieved with a row of lion-heads with arched niches in between, all crowned by a band bearing a series of panels, alternately containing a flower.

DOOR-FRAME OF THE SANCTUM.—The jambs of the wide oblong doorway are plain but faceted. Beyond the jambs is a pilaster with a moulded base, a faceted shaft and a moulded capital. The member above the capital is relieved with a row of lion-heads and multifoil niches, all crowned by a series of panels. Perched on this member is a bird. From the pair of these members rises above the representation of a triangular roof, of which only the lowest portion has survived. There was a wooden door with two leaves, holes for the posts of which exist in the lintel.

INTERIOR OF THE SANCTUM.—The extant walls of the oblong sanctum are plain except for the uppermost portion of the available topmost course. This particular strip which projects forward over the vertical wall is faceted. This is evidently the beginning of the oversailing courses which supported the ceiling or the roof.

EXTERIOR OF THE SANCTUM.—Externally, the sanctum is *tri-ratha* on plan. Above the bottom vertical plinth

is a quirked ovolo with a thin receding fillet above. The wide recess (dado) over the last is boldly relieved with atlantes in the attitude of supporting superstructure, *kinnaras*, animals including elephants and lions, pilasters and human figures. Above the recess is a splayed-out member, its lower half is slightly receding. Considerably receding from this member is a plain course, also *tri-ratha* on plan on the northern, southern and eastern sides.

All the three central projections simulate the façade of a gabled structure with its triangular roof in two tiers (upper tier missing). The roof is upheld by two heavy oblong masonry pilasters. While the shaft of these pilasters is plain, the base is moulded: above the vertical plinth with a receding facet is a quirked ovolo capped by a thin receding fillet; receding from the last is a plain dado, projecting from which is a filleted torus with a receding fillet below and above; projecting from the last is the crowning splayed-out moulding. The capital of the pilasters is in the form of two splayed-out members, the upper part of the upper member having a row of oblong panels. Above the last is another splayed-out member divided into four horizontal friezes; while the bottom and the third are relieved with animal-heads spaced by arched niches, the second and the top have each a horizontal row of panels. On this member rests the base of the triangular roof.

Framed within this pair of pilasters supporting the triangular roof is a lofty trefoil arch (higher than the arch of the front side of the *maṇḍapa*) springing from the moulded capitals of a pair of pilasters. The latter's base

presents mouldings similar to those of the base of the main pilasters.

Within the trefoil arches on three sides are spacious oblong framed niches which evidently accommodated the colossal images (missing) of the three *pārśva-devatās*. The jambs of each of these three niches are faceted, while the panelled lintel presents a horizontal row of trefoil niches between dwarf pilasters or animal-heads. The jambs and the lintel are flanked by two fluted pilasters with three mouldings at the base and a fluted capital. The architrave over these pilasters and lintel is relieved with trefoil niches (spaced by animal-heads?), above which is a frieze of oblong panels. Over this member reared up the representation of a triangular roof, of which remnants at the base alone are now available.

All the *kanikas* above a running plain course have each a masonry pilaster with mouldings at the base. Out of these mouldings four are similar to those of the main pilasters of the central projections. Above the fourth moulding is a recess, over which is a torus. Above the base-mouldings is an oblong panel at the beginning of the shaft. Over this is a succession of three miniature representations of shrines with double-tiered triangular roofs supported by pilasters having moulded bases. All the miniatures are within oblong frames. Within the trefoil niche inside the miniatures is a standing figure, possibly of a deity. Above the topmost miniature is the splayed-out capital (relieved with trefoil niches) with a gadrooned (?) member at the base.

The pilasters of the *kanikas* support an entablature, interrupted by the triangular roof of the central

projections. The architrave of this entablature is relieved with a row of trefoil niches formed by a row of brackets (pillar-capitals) or animal-heads, crowning which is a row of panels. Above this is a frieze of dancing *gaṇas*, each within a trefoil niche formed by flanking brackets relieved with animal-heads. The cornice over this supported the pyramidal roof of the sanctum.

That the roof of the sanctum rose higher than that of the *maṇḍapa* is evident from the fact that the latter's entablature with the same decorative scheme is at a lower level. Thus, the top of the architrave of the *maṇḍapa* is at the middle height of the frame bearing the topmost miniature shrine of the *kanikas* of the sanctum.

EXTERIOR OF THE MAṆḌAPA.—The front side of the *maṇḍapa* resembles the three exterior sides of the sanctum practically in all respects and, therefore, does not call for a detailed description. The only deviations are the absence of mouldings above the vertical course of the base and the presence of four mouldings alone on the corner-pilasters. Over the entablature survives in fragments the base course supporting the sloping roof. This course has a groove underneath to break the flow of water.

The two side (northern and southern) walls of the *maṇḍapa* are plain except for two shallow pilasters, each with a base of four mouldings, supporting a shallow faceted lintel with a splayed-out top. Immediately above this lintel is an oblong chase made in the face of both the walls. The chase evidently was meant for receiving the slabs which projected from the base of the roof of the two double-chambered wings that flank the *maṇḍapa*.

The exterior façade of the two side doors of the *maṇḍapa* simulates that of a structure with a double-tiered triangular roof resting on a member, the latter perched on two pilasters flanking the door-jambs. There is a frieze of trefoil niches between brackets (or animal-heads) in this member, on the projecting ends of which are birds. With an oblong shaft, the pilasters have each four mouldings at the base and two mouldings (the upper being splayed-out) at the capital. While the door-jambs are faceted, the lintel is panelled with a defaced motif in the central part.

FLANKING WINGS.—The two small wings flanking the *maṇḍapa* are both partitioned internally, so that each is a set of two small cells without any intercommunicating opening. While the door of one cell faces the west, that of the other opens towards the east in both the structures. Only the door-frame of the eastern cell of the northern flank preserves the complete features. The door-jambs are faceted, while the lintel is panelled. Beyond the jambs are pilasters with four mouldings of the usual type at the base, oblong shafts and capitals with gradually expanding mouldings. The narrow members over the capitals support, apart from two birds, the representation of a triangular roof. Within the framework of this roof is a trefoil niche bearing the figure of a deity seated in *lalitāsana* on a lotus with kneeling devotees near the lotus-seat.

The finished façade of this cell below the narrow door would normally preclude the possibility of a masonry staircase. Perhaps the cells were negotiated

by a portable wooden staircase or a ladder. If it was so, the cells were not meant for public access. It is not unlikely that the cells were used for keeping valuable and ritualistic objects.

The treatment of the base of these two structures is similar to that of the sanctum. Here also the recess above the quirked ovolo is boldly relieved with atlantes in the attitude of supporting superstructure, *kinnaras*, elephants, lions, human figures and pilasters. Above this frieze of assorted figures is a projecting facet, over which is a splayed-out member. Over the latter and considerably receding from it is a high vertical course which forms the sills of the doors as well as the bases of the pilasters.

The two side (northern and southern) walls of both the structures have each the representations of the façades of two structures in relief (placed side by side) with a triangular roof capped by a *ghaṭa*. A horizontal moulding ties the two flanks of the roof which rests on two pilasters. With four mouldings at the base the pilasters are crowned by a succession of three gradually expanding mouldings. Above the capital is a splayed-out member supporting a bird and the base of the triangular roof. The high trefoil niches provided within these miniatures have faceted jambs. They evidently contained images, now all missing.

The two miniatures, of equal height, on each side are arrayed within high oblong frames, faceted on three sides. Above the top raised border of these frames is a horizontal panel relieved with a row of gabled structures (four complete and two halves, one at either end), separated from one another by pilasters (five). The

ends of the roofs rest on a splayed-out member above the capitals of the pilasters. Within the gabled structures are trefoil niches, the spaces within left uncarved.

Above the horizontal panel is a projecting member relieved with a frieze of small oblong panels at its upper part. This projecting member rests on pilasters provided at all the four corners of the two structures. The bases of the pilasters with four usual mouldings stand on the plain course which runs below the door-openings and the trefoil niches of the miniatures. While the oblong shaft of the pilasters is plain, the faceted capital is a splayed-out member.

(*iii*) *Courtyard and subsidiary structures*

The spacious oblong courtyard around the temple was mostly paved with stone slabs. Patches of this pavement still survive at places.

In front of the staircase giving access to the *maṇḍapa* is a small square tank. It used to be fed by water brought through a stone channel, possibly from a canal on the hill-side behind the enclosure of the temple.

In front of this tank and a few metres east of the inner steps of the gateway is a square platform of small dimensions, reduced to its bottom course. It might have supported a free-standing pillar bearing the figure of Aruṇa at the crown.

There are several subsidiary shrines, all of which appear to be later than the temple. Four of them (one each near the four corners of the enclosure) preserve partly their base-mouldings. Behind the north-western

corner-shrine lies the upper portion of a very large *liṅga* of smoothly-polished stone.

The north-eastern corner-shrine, though reduced to its moulded base, is interesting on account of the existence of an inscription on a part of the recess (dado) above the quirked ovolo (rising above the plinth) and below the splayed-out member. The inscription originally consisted of not less than eight lines in Śāradā characters. Unfortunately, the inscription is badly damaged and could not be correctly deciphered. According to the translation furnished by Pandit Madhusudan Kaul, it records the dedication of an image of Mṛitāṇḍa (Mārtaṇḍa) by Śrīvarmā, possibly a king. On palaeographical grounds, the inscription has been placed towards the end of the ninth century A.D. by G. S. Gai, the former Chief Epigraphist, Archaeological Survey of India.

The recessed course (dado) above the quirked ovolo of the base of the south-eastern shrine is relieved with niches punctuated with pilasters. These niches contain *gaṇas*, dancing and playing on musical instruments.

There are remains of other structures, all near the south-western corner, reduced to one or two courses.

Embedded within the ground of the courtyard are many colossal stout neckless storage-jars with a collared rim, a pear-shaped profile and a conical base.

(*iv*) *Cells and their fronting colonnade*

Around the courtyard is a fairly high solid basement running on all sides and supporting the ranges of cells and the roofed peristyle (pl. XVIII B). The total

number of cells is eighty-three—twenty-five each on the northern and southern sides, nineteen on the eastern side and fourteen (in two flanks) on the western side. The two corner-cells (the south-eastern one has disappeared with the collapse of the major portion of the wall of this corner) of the eastern side have their approach through the adjoining cells of this side. Of the fourteen cells (seven on either flank of the gateway) of the western side, twelve face the courtyard. The remaining two cells of this side have their doorways facing the forecourt.

The inner side (facing the courtyard) of the basement has a projected course below (above the floor-level of the courtyard) and above with two receding courses (in one plumb) in between. While the treatment of the outer face of three of the sides is more or less the same, that of the outer face of the front (western) side is slightly more elaborate. Thus, above the plinth is a quirked ovolo with a receding fillet, over which is a conspicuous recess (dado) capped by a plain projection. Receding from the last is the topmost plain course forming a sort of a ledge behind the back peripheral wall of the cells of the western side. The top of the ledge is at a level (actually two courses below the inner floor-level of the basement) much lower than the top of the basement of the inner side.

The exterior side of the western basement presents two projections, one each in front of the north-western and south-western corner-cells. These two cells, like the central cell of other three sides, are distinguished by a pair of additional columns in front of them. The two

columns, standing at the corners of the projected part of the basement, evidently supported the gabled roof of a narrow portico in front of the two corner-cells. Apart from these two pairs of columns, there were fourteen (seven on either side of the gateway) more standing in a row on the ledge of the front (western) side of the western basement behind the running back wall of the cells (in two flanks) which face the courtyard. This colonnade was introduced not only to break the monotony of the otherwise plain back wall of the cells but to impart a pleasing effect to the façade.

The inner side of the basement has three small projections, one each in front of the central cell of the northern, eastern and southern sides. At each of the two corners of these three projected parts is a column. There are also columns at regular intervals along the top edge of the basement facing the segments of walls between the door-openings of the cells. The total number of columns of the quadrangular roofed peristyle facing the courtyard is eighty-six (excluding those connected with the gateway). The two columns in front of the central cell of the three sides are higher than the rest.

The base of these columns is moulded. Above the bottom vertical portion (plinth) is a receding part, over which is a quirked ovolo with a straight fillet above. The recess over the last is surmounted by a filleted torus with a fillet both below and above. Projecting above this is a splayed-out member supporting an incipient *khurā*, the crowning moulding of the base. With two exceptions which were perhaps left unfinished, all the shafts of the standing colonnade have twenty-four flutes. Above the

shaft and crowning two or three fillets (the central one with a semicircular profile) is a circular prominently-gadrooned member with beaded strings in the grooves. Above this circular member of the capital is a high splayed-out squarish member with fillets below and above, crowning which is an overhanging curved top with a row of oblong panels.

The capitals of the columns support each an architrave which projects forward from the front wall of the cells. On the wall side, these architraves are sustained by shallow pilasters flanked by receding facets. The splayed-out facing of the architraves is faceted corbel-wise. Above the bottom facets (two or three) is a row of projecting squares with bracket-like tops spaced by trefoil niches; as the facing of the architraves is preserved only at a few specimens, it could not be ascertained if all such squares are left plain or carved with animal-heads. Above this row is a oversailing facet, projecting over which is a member with a curved face. Above this is again a row of small squares (with bracket-like tops) with trefoil niches in between. Over this are two gradually-rising facets supporting the topmost projection with curved sides and relieved with a row of panels. Above these architraves is preserved only one course at places of the northern and southern sides. Its façade is in oversailing facets running horizontally, two of the facets being somewhat curved. This course formed the ceiling of the roofed peristyle (rather an extremely narrow verandah).

On the top of the basement beyond the floor of the colonnade rises a course which forms the sill of the

door-opening of the cells as well as the base-course of the walls. The door-openings of the cells, with the exception of those of the three central cells, are trefoil, the jambs being vertically faceted. On either side of the door-opening of the cells is a pilaster with four mouldings at the base, a semicircular shaft and a vase-shaped capital crowned by a faceted splayed-out member. Above the last is another faceted splayed-out member with the sides of the top facet curved. These top members of the pair of pilasters flanking each doorway, support, apart from birds, the framework upholding the triangular roof-representation. Above the horizontal members connecting the two sloping sides of the roofs are various figures including mythological animals, *kinnaras*, *gaṇas* and *vidyādharas* carrying garlands.

The shallow pilasters against the stretches of walls between the doorways of the cells have thin receding vertical facets by their sides. The projecting member above the pilasters runs partly behind the triangular roof. It is in facets, rising corbelwise.

The door-openings of the three central cells (pl. XVII B) are larger and oblong. Their jambs are faceted while the lintels are panelled. The border above the central panel has a row of brackets with foiled niches in between. Beyond the jambs are pilasters, similar to those flanking the trefoil door-openings of other cells. The faceted splayed-out members above their capitals support a projecting architrave relieved with imposts having trefoil niches in between. Above these imposts is a thin projecting facet capped by a projecting member with a curved façade relieved with a row of

small panels. Above this architrave rises the framework underneath the roof-representation, of which the lowest portion alone is now preserved.

The top of the sill is flush with the top of the floor of the cells. In each course of the back wall of these cells there are two rows of stone slabs, the combined width of two such slabs forming the thickness of the wall. The uppermost available course of the walls in some of the cells is corbelled. Evidently, the ceiling of the cells rested on corbelled courses. There are no sockets for door-posts in the cells with trefoil door-openings. Presumably, these cells had no regular wooden doors.

That most of the cells were designed as small chapels is proved by the existence of pedestals for images in some of the cells. The moulded pedestal inside the central cell of the northern side consists of a plinth, a quirked ovolo with a top fillet, a dado and a filleted torus with a fillet below and above. There is a large oblong socket in the centre of the top portion of the pedestal which has a spout facing the east. The pedestal rests on an oblong slab. This particular cell had a wooden door with two leaves, circular sockets for the door-posts of which exist in the lintel and the door-sill. An oblong socket is also present in the centre of the door-sill. The inner side of the two jambs is cut aslant so that the opening is wider inwards and the door-leaves can be conveniently thrown open. The central cell of the southern side had also a double-leafed wooden door, as indicated by the existence of the sockets in the lintel.

Another monolithic pedestal with mouldings exists in the central cell of the eastern side. There is no other

slab below this pedestal. The front side of the latter's spout is relieved with a *makara*-head. Fitted to the socket of the pedestal is the tenon of a stone image, reduced to its lowest part. Two feet of one of the attendants of the main image, the right foot of the main image and the middle portion of Pṛithvī (emerging from the pedestal; lowest portion of the goddess unrepresented) are available in the fragment. To judge by the figure of Pṛithvī, the image represented Vishṇu.

One (the third one from the central cell on the western flank of the northern side) of the cells with trefoil door-openings also contains a moulded pedestal placed on a separate stone. With its spout facing the east, the pedestal provides an oblong socket for the tenon of the missing image.

(*v*) *Gateway*

Access to the courtyard is gained through an imposing gateway (pl. XIX), provided in the centre of the western side of the basement supporting the cells and the roofed peristyle. The lofty double-chambered gateway is approached by a flight of steps from the front court which is at a level lower than the rest of the surroundings. On either side of the stair is a sloping member, beyond which is a raised parapet. The gateway is *triratha* on plan externally.

The narrow landing in front of the gateway and also on the rear side facing the courtyard had each originally four pillars. Two (missing on the front side) are in front of the inner pilasters of the front and rear

sides of the gateway and one each at the corner of the landing. Evidently, the two middle pillars supported the triangular roof of a narrow portico projecting from the superstructure of the gateway. In front of the shallow outer pilasters of the central projections of the northern and southern sides is a pillar raised on the basement, while in front of the corresponding inner pilasters of the central projections of these very sides is a half pillar attached to the wall of the inner peristyle. The outer pillar and the inner half pillar also supported a triangular roof projecting from these two sides of the superstructure of the gateway.

The western and eastern faces of the gateway have each four broad pilasters of masonry. The two middle pilasters, flanking the central opening, are more projected than the two at corners. The front side of these two pilasters of both the sides have, above the four usual mouldings of the base, representations of three miniature temples with double-tiered triangular roofs, each within an oblong frame. Inside the arched niches of these miniatures are figures. The miniatures are arrayed in vertical succession, but separated from one another by oblong panels with reliefs of birds, scrolls and other motifs within. Above the topmost panel are mouldings, from the uppermost one of which, presumably, sprang up the trefoil arch. The side of these pilasters facing the opening is faceted.

The treatment of the two sides of the outer pilasters of both the eastern and western sides of the gateway is similar to that of the front side of the inner pilasters. However, here, the miniature representations of the

structures with the double-tiered triangular roof are not only broader but taller, so that the panel containing the topmost miniature rises higher than the crowning moulding of the inner pilasters. Further, the miniatures have each a sort of a portico with a triangular roof projecting from the lower tier of the main roof and resting on pilasters with ornamental shafts. The upper tier of the main roof of the miniatures is flanked by flying *vidyādharas*. The missing crowning member (evidently splayed out and faceted) of these outer pilasters supported an entablature, part of which ran behind the trefoil arch. Above this entablature rose the pyramidal roof.

The gateway is divided into two compartments, the middle portion of the partition-wall providing the spacious doorway. The two side walls of the front and rear compartments are exuberantly carved, the decorative scheme being identical in all the walls. Unfortunately, the reliefs are so weather-worn and damaged that the details can hardly be made out. In the lower part of the walls is a broad oblong faceted panel, in the middle portion of which is frieze of *gaṇas*, some dancing and playing on musical instruments. Perched above the topmost projected moulding of the panel is the miniature representation of a shrine with a double-tiered triangular roof within an oblong frame. Projecting from the lower tier of the roof is the triangular roof of a pillared portico. The treatment of the shafts of the latter's pilasters is varied: some have oblique flutings with beaded lines in the grooves; others are in segments, alternately gadrooned (with beaded lines in the grooves) and lotus-petalled. The capitals are faceted and splayed-out.

Within the trefoil niche of these miniatures is the standing figure of a deity in the company of attendants. None of the figures in these four miniatures (in the four side walls of the two compartments) could be correctly identified on account of the weathering. While the two figures in the front compartment are two-armed, one of the two in the rear compartment is four-armed. On either side of the upper tier of the triangular roof is a flying *vidyādhara* couple of fine workmanship. Above the roof is a frieze of rejoicing *gaṇas*. Further above is a broad oblong panel bearing within a row of tiny shrines in low relief spaced by pilasters; the trefoil niche of these miniatures contains a figure. Still higher up and above a projecting faceted member is the topmost available course of the wall bearing the representations of three shrines with triangular roofs in bold relief. The framework below the triangular roof is supported by two pilasters. Each of the miniatures is provided with a trefoil niche bearing the figure, possibly, of a deity. The miniatures are spaced by pilasters with moulded bases and oblong shafts.

Both the flanks of the two sides of the partition-wall are faceted. One of the broad facets of each flank is relieved with a vertical succession of structures with triangular roofs (some in two tiers) resting on pilasters with moulded bases. Within their trefoil niches is a figure. The oblong frames around the miniatures are separated from one another by oblong panels bearing motifs including a pair of *haṁsas*.

Placed on a broad door-sill, the jambs of the doorway are faceted. The side of the two jambs facing the

door-opening has been sharply bevelled, so that the door-opening increases towards the inner compartment. Provided within the inner side of the northern jamb is a deep socket which used to receive the bar that bolted the wooden door. The lintel is not in position.

From the floor of the inner compartment two steps descend down to the courtyard.

PLATES

PLATE II

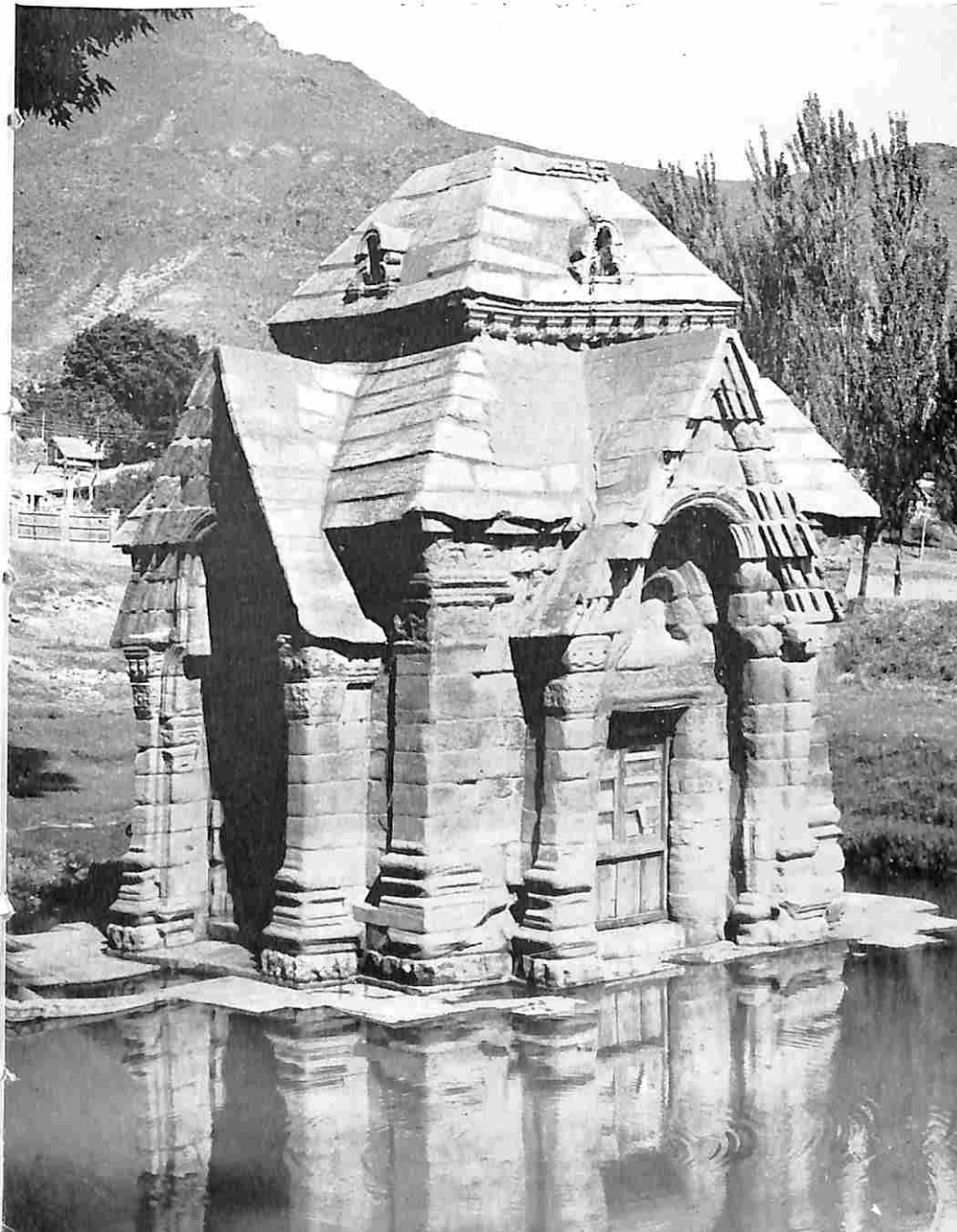
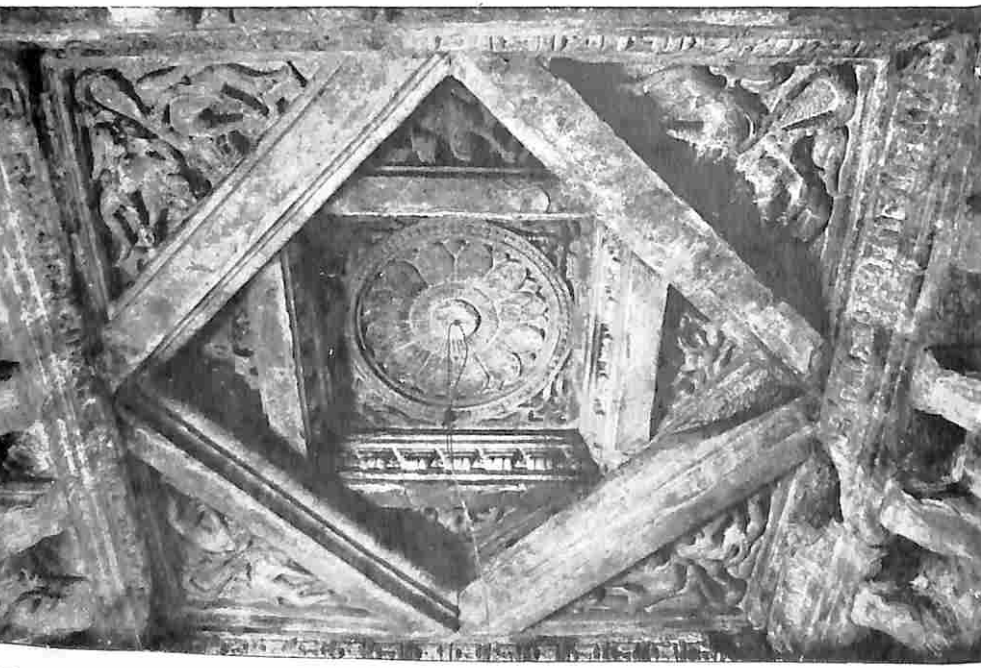


PLATE IV

A

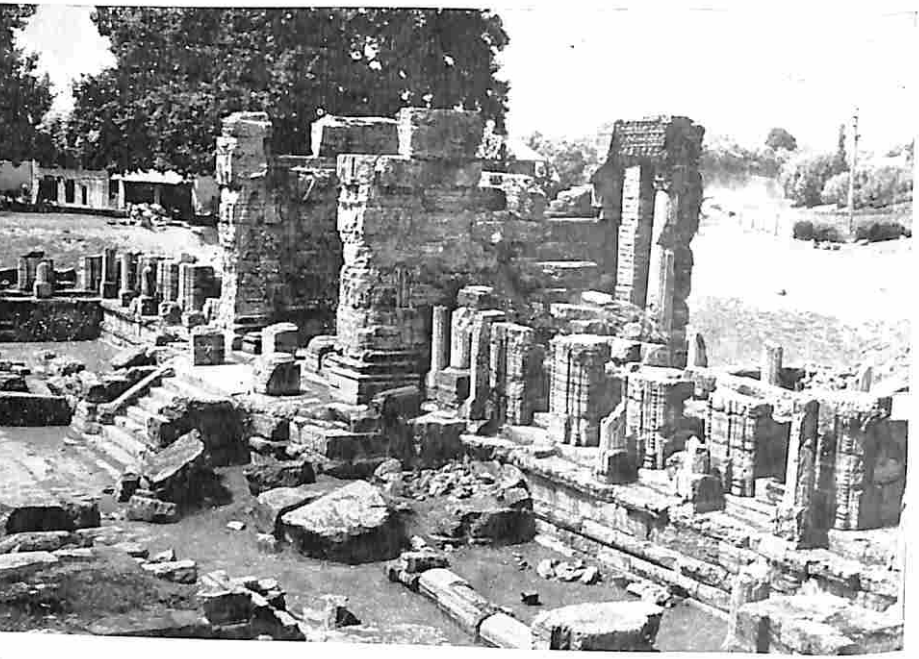


B

A

B

PLATE VI



A

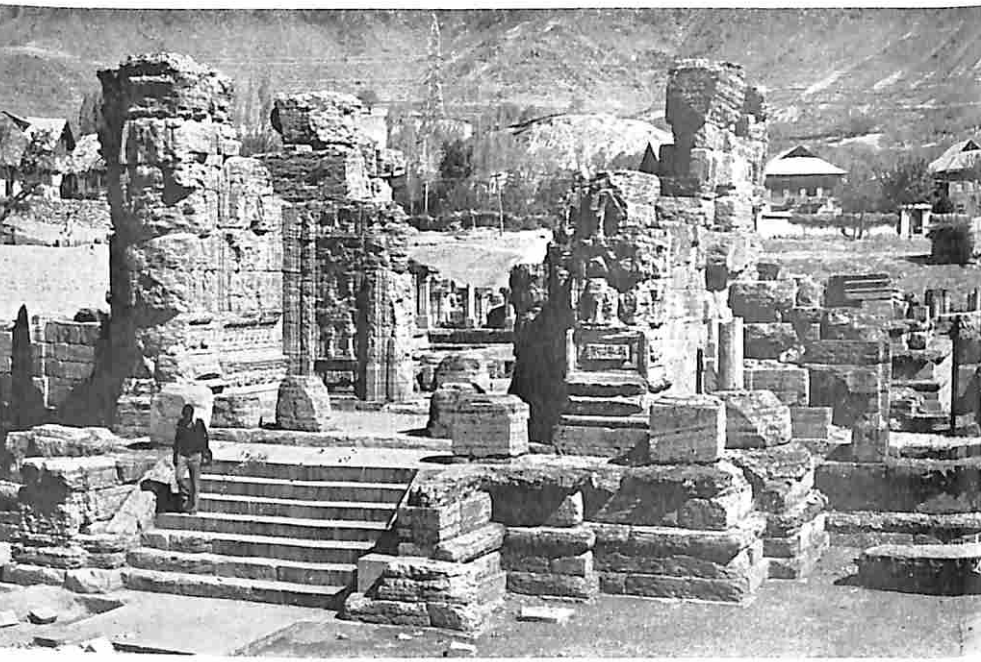
B

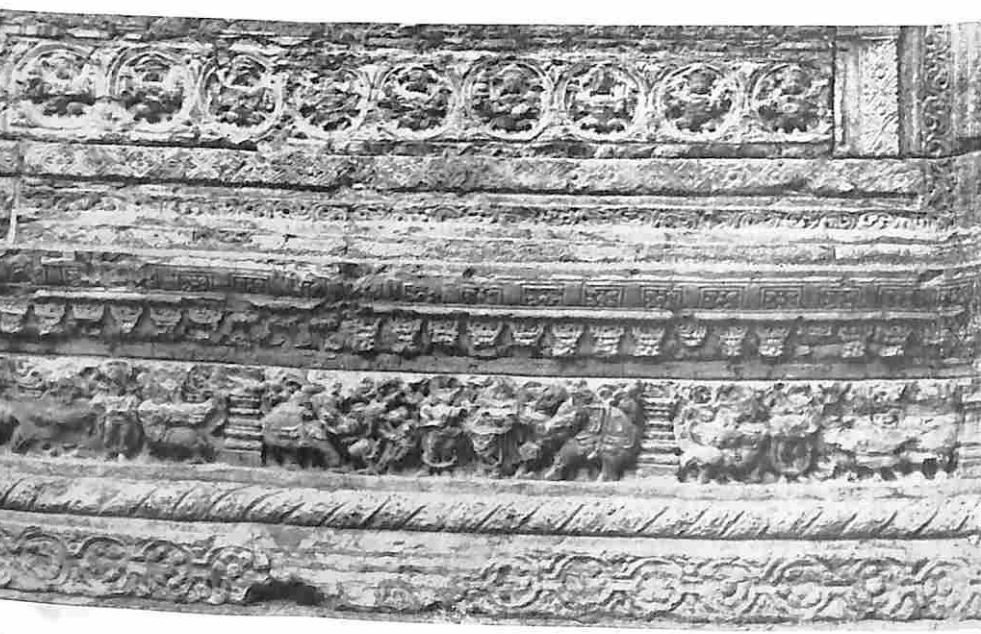
A

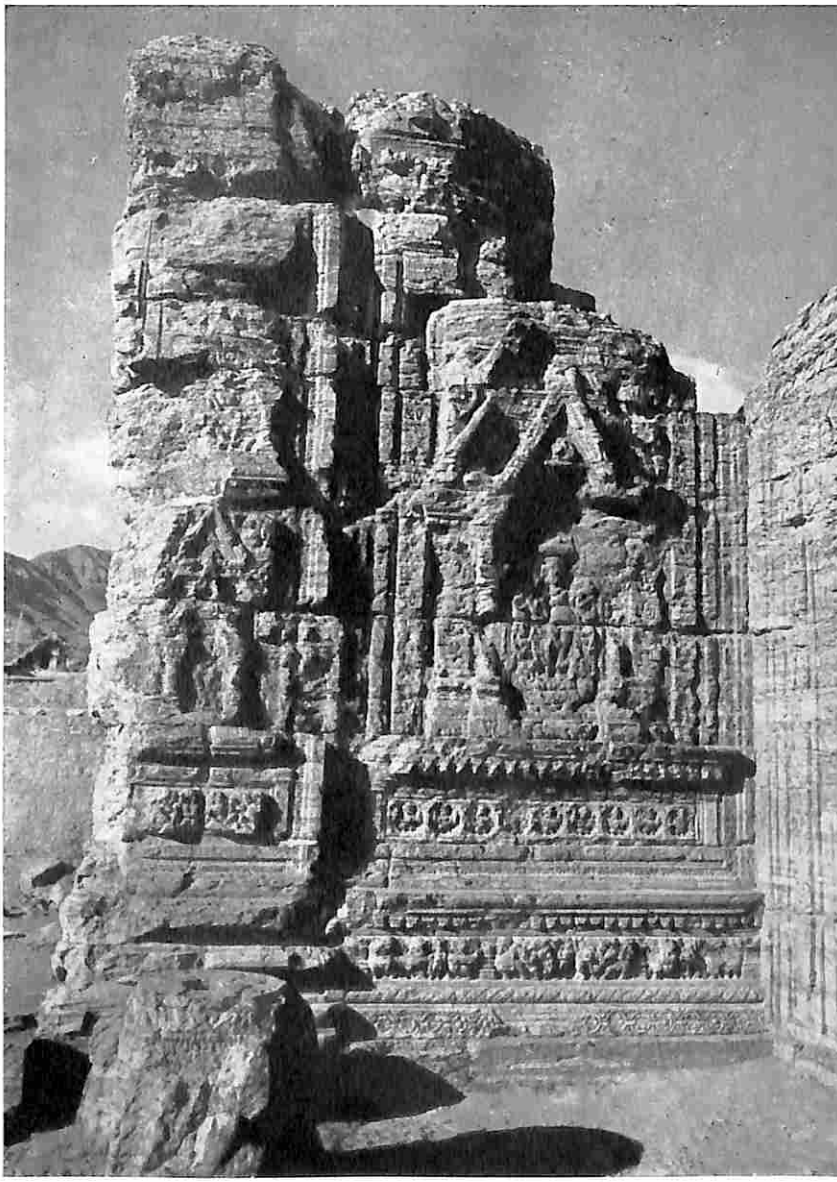
B

C

PLATE VIII







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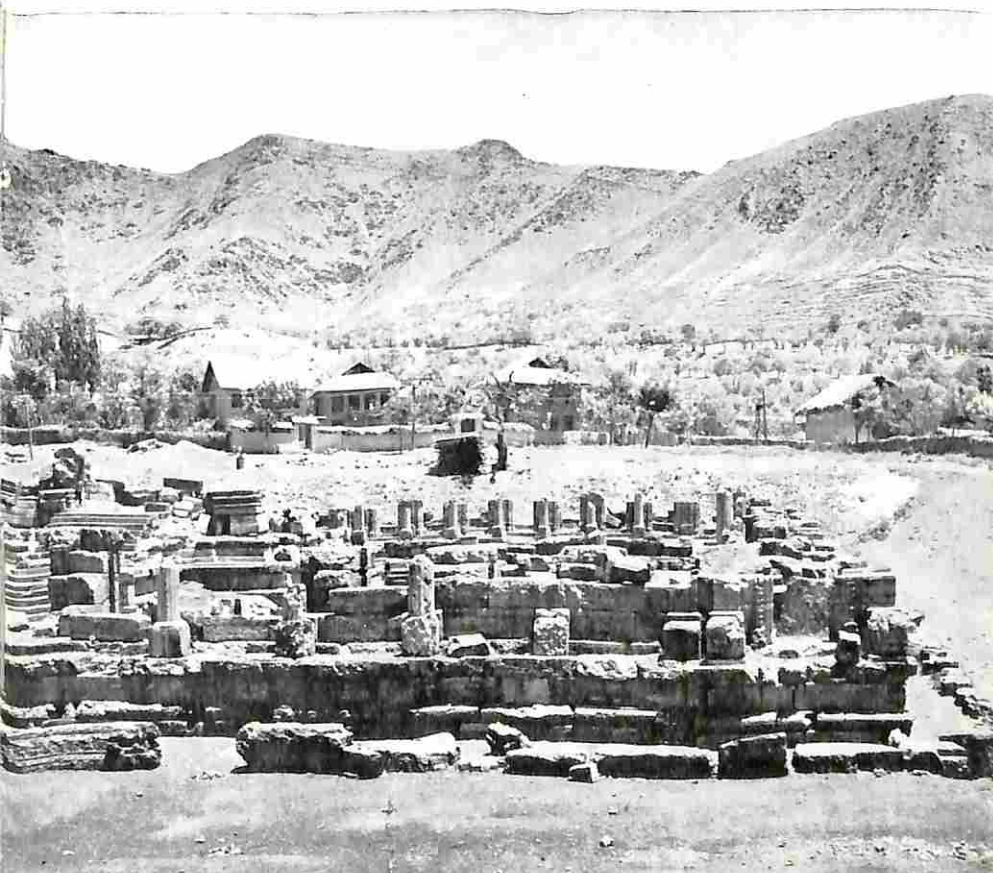

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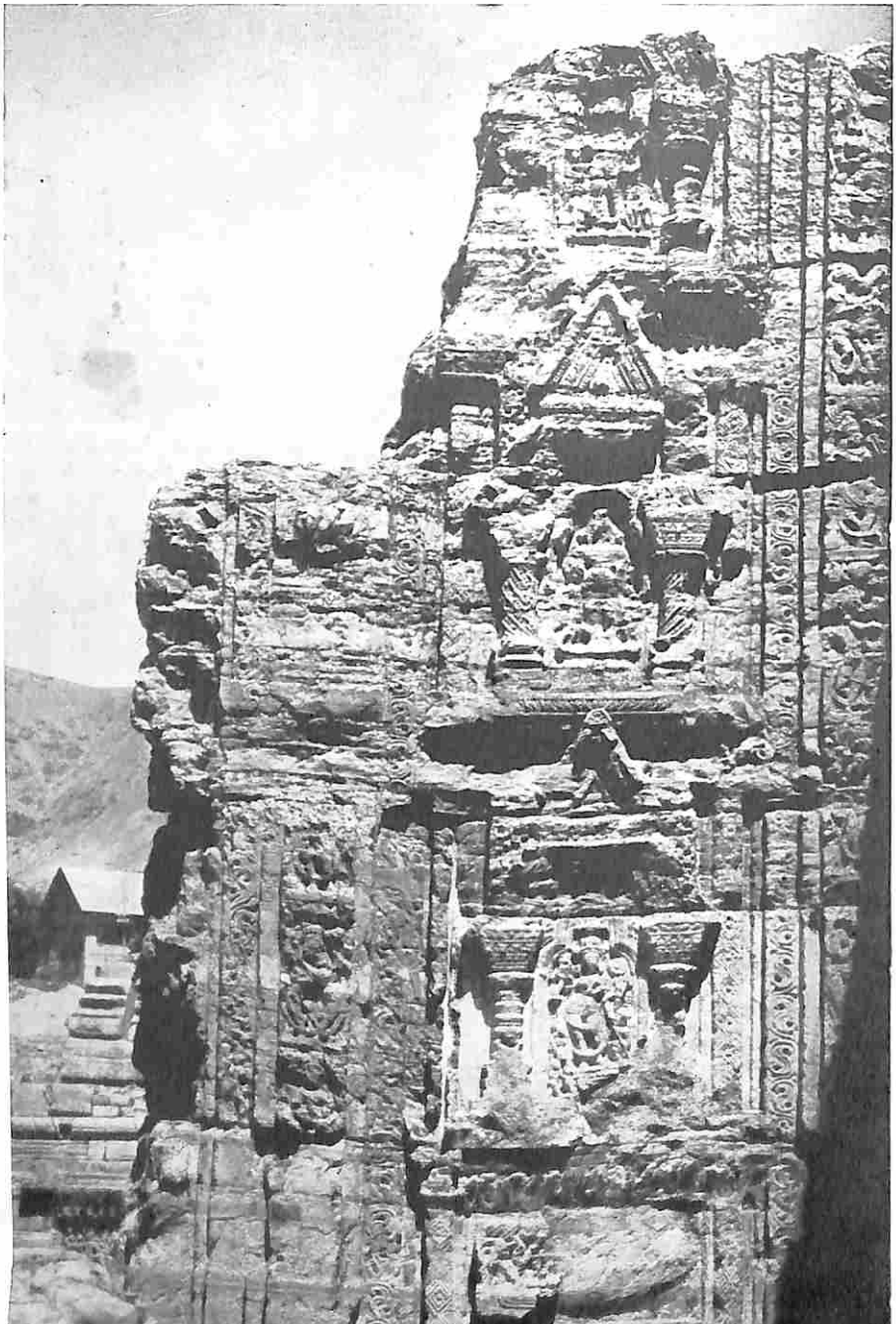


PLATE XIII

A

B

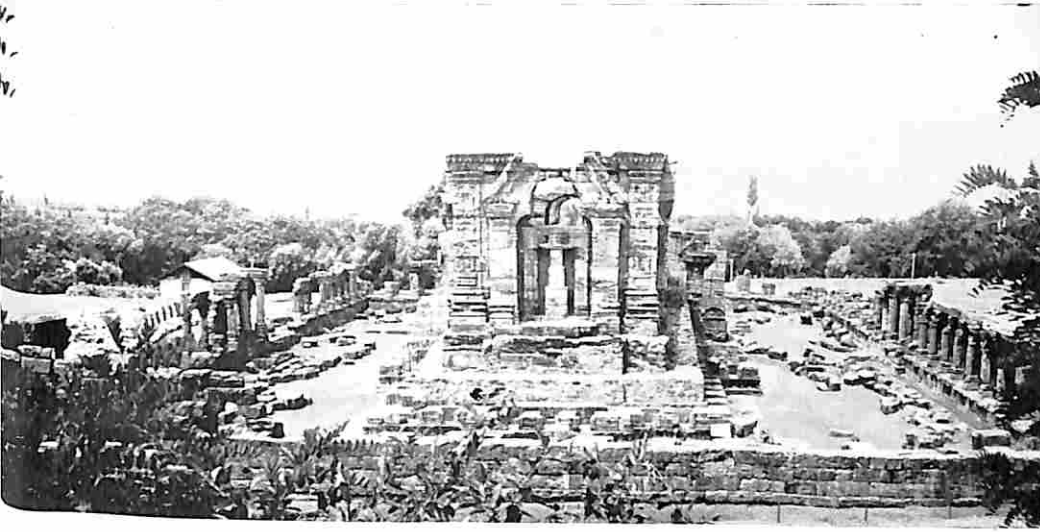
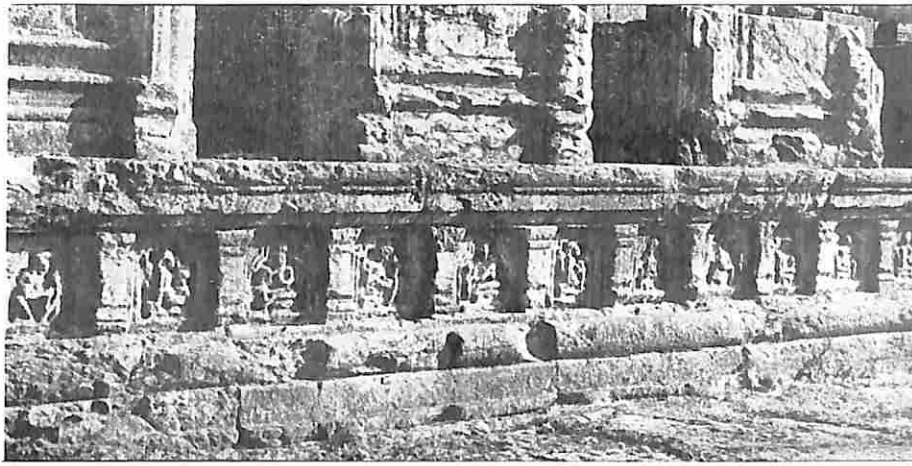


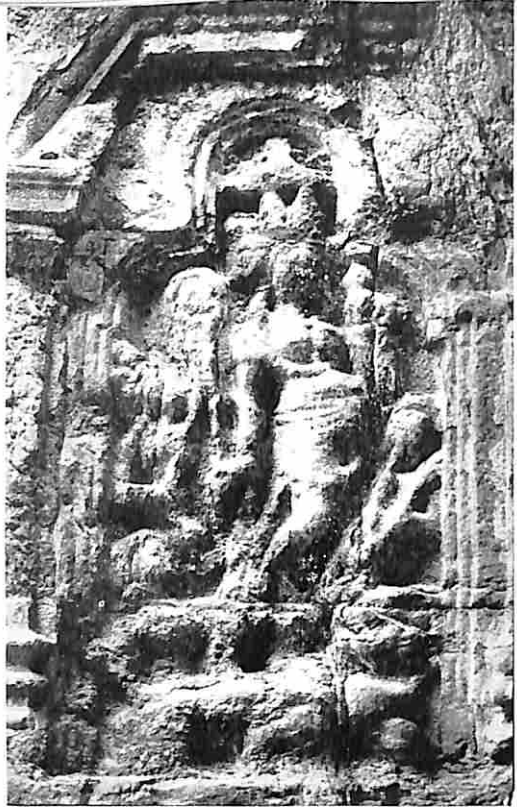
PLATE XV



A

B

PLATE XVII



A

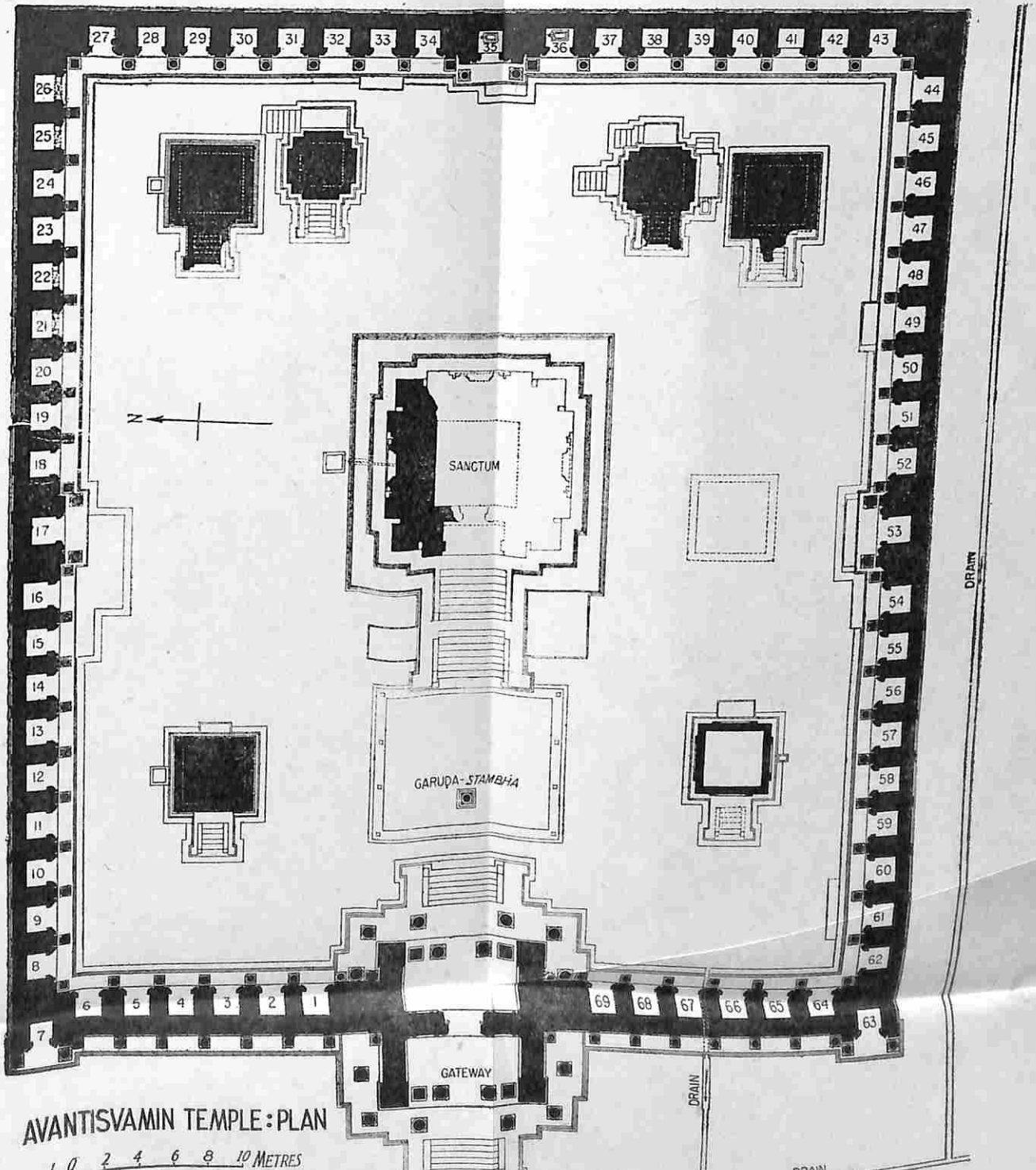
B

PLATE XVIII

A

B

PLATE XIX



AVANTISVAMIN TEMPLE: PLAN

0 2 4 6 8 10 METRES

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